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Mouth of the River
Publication of Oyster River High School

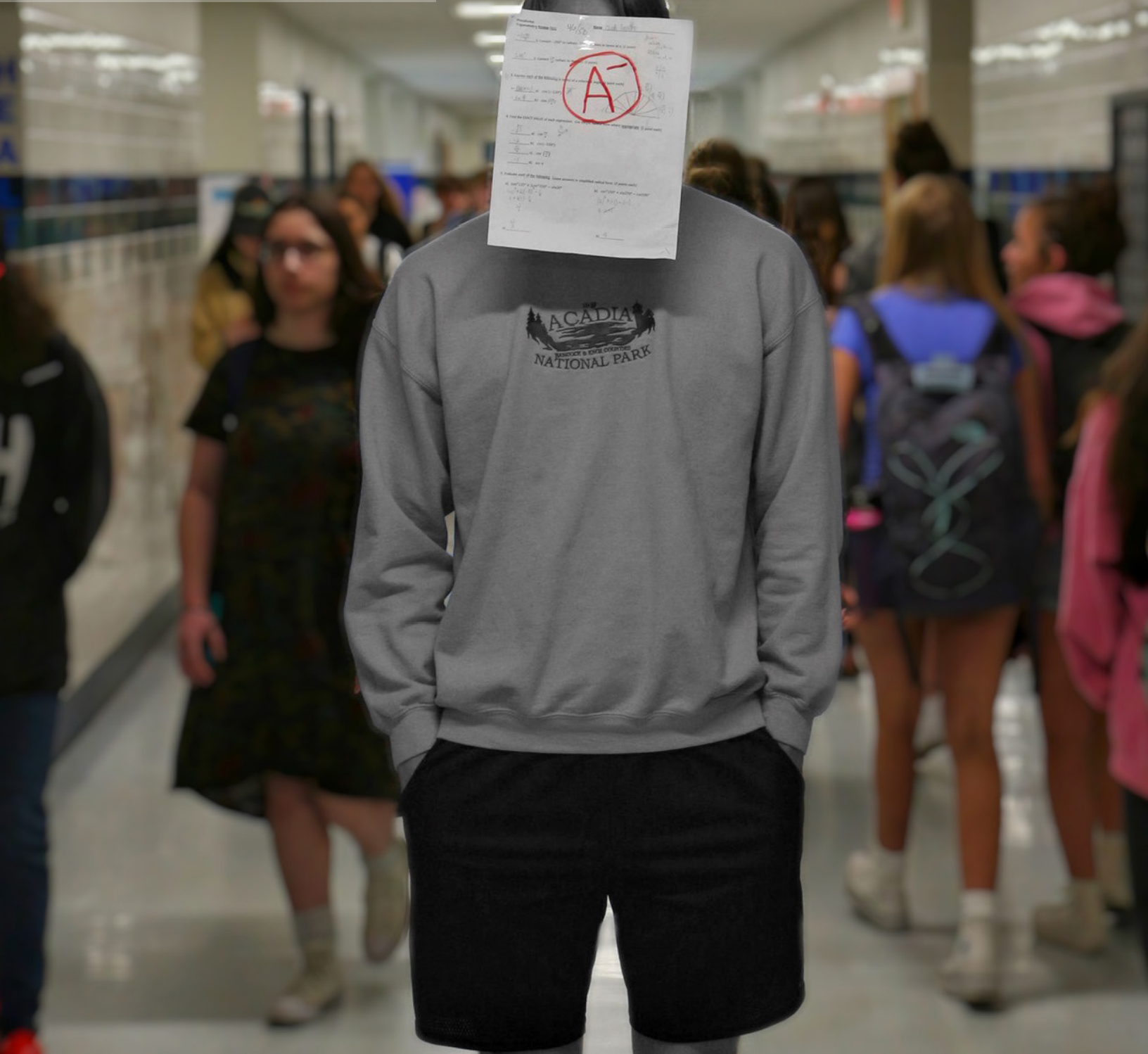


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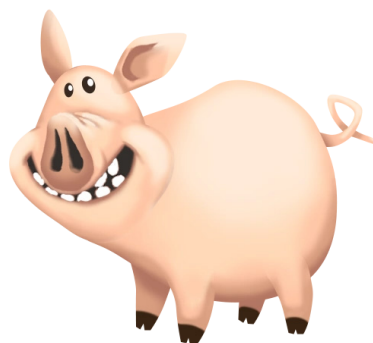
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Dear Readers,

We are happy to present you all with the final issue of the 2022-2023 school year. This year has been an amazing year for Mouth of the River, as we are happy to say we are now an award-winning publication! That's right, Mouth of the River took home a second-place award for high school journalism from the New Hampshire Press Association. This year, the staff has really worked to challenge themselves in their writing, editing, and all other skills that go into being on the Mouth of the River's staff. We could not be prouder of the content we have created, and the memories we have made this year.

This issue not only has great content, but also great colors for our first full color print of the year! The creative cover of this issue shows a correlation with the feeling of needing perfect grades and how it affects students at Oyster River High School. See Sarah Laliberte's article in the magazine to hear more about the need for perfect grades.

The articles this quarter are some of the staff's strongest work and cover a wide range of topics around school and the Oyster River community, from Libby Davidson commenting on the popularity of Hay Day to Abby Owens getting into the representation of the Oyster River Massacre.

Even if you can't catch the colors of the magazine, you can catch the content of the website with a wide range of multimedia, from Zoe Selig and Tess Brown talking about their religions in high school, Delaney Nadeau and Sarah Laliberte showing the fulfilling career of PEP teacher Laurie Grant, and Grace Webb writing about how having advanced humanities class might be more beneficial than AP English courses. All these articles can be found at www.mor.news!

We want to thank everyone who has given us their continual support over the past 60 years, that's right, 60 years, that Mouth of the River has been a publication. Writing for this magazine has been an incredible experience and I think we can all agree when we say we will miss this class so much as we move on to the next chapters of our lives. We are so grateful to have worked with and gotten to lead this talented staff.

Happy Reading,

Zoe Selig, Libby Davidson, and Tess Brown





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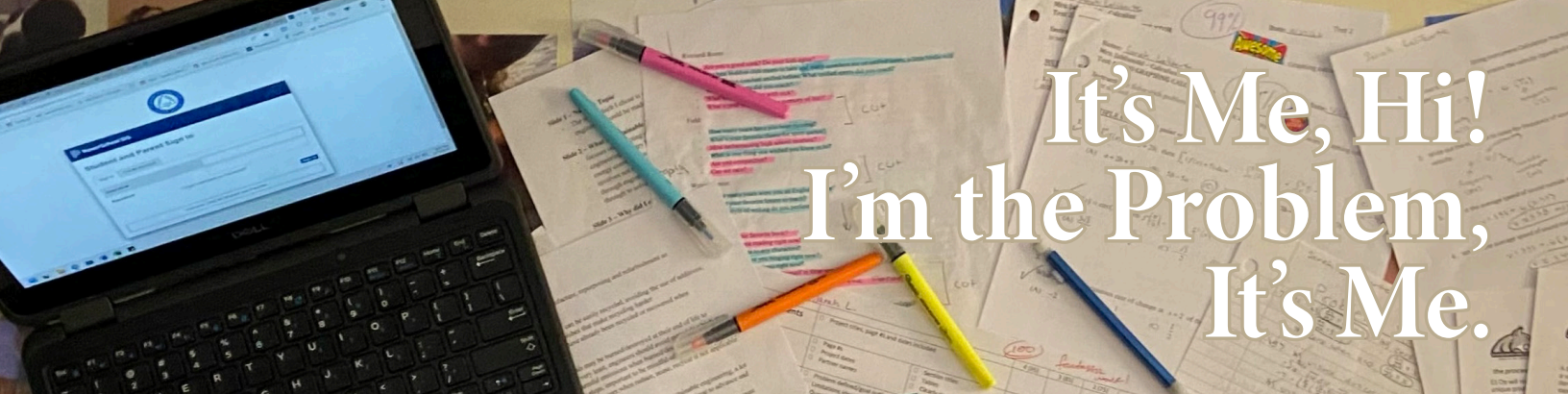
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Mouth of the River Mission Statement

Mouth of the River seeks to reliably inform the student body, as well as the surrounding community, of interesting and newsworthy content in a modern, compelling format. Our goal as a staff is to give voice to the students of Oyster River, and have it heard by all our students. The opinions expressed in Mouth of the River represent those of the writers and staff.



It's Me, Hi! I'm the Problem, It's Me.

Mr. Kelly and I were standing in the hallway trying to figure out what my last article would be when he asked me what I would tell my freshman self. While, ideally, I would tell myself not to try so hard and that the grades aren't worth the struggle, I find that hypocritical. If I were to go back in time, I'm not sure I would do anything differently. Not because I found a way to combat this issue but because I'm still stuck in this toxic mindset. If anything, I think my perfectionist tendencies might be even worse if I were to do it all again. I've seen the outcome and have become addicted to it despite the personal consequences. I have become so obsessed with the idea of grades and being as perfect as possible academically, that I've learned to sacrifice everything to achieve these unrealistic standards. With this response, Mr. Kelly simply replied, "write about it."

This conversation left me wondering: why do I care so much? Why am I willing to make myself miserable just for this thing that won't matter in a few years, maybe even a few months? Especially now that I've committed to a college and would have to fail out of school to get that taken away from me, why do I still feel the need to get such good grades? Why does it feel like I need these perfect grades to survive? Even writing this article, I'm worried it won't be good enough or produce a grade that I'm proud of. But why? Why does it matter?

I still don't know the answers to these. It's something I've wrestled with my entire high school career, but especially this year. Honestly, I'm kind of over it. I hate feeling this way, yet I can't seem

put everything I have into school and my assignments, which have ultimately become the core of my identity.

Because I devote almost all my energy to academic perfection, I mostly receive validation because of my grades and academic performance. I want to know that the people I surround myself with are proud of me, and I have found school to be my way to prove that. I constantly seek validation because I don't have the self-esteem to provide it myself. "The way that [people] attain validity as a human is through work. So, you are working as hard as you can, and that's how you know that you're being a good person, good daughter, sister, friend, et cetera. You personally determine your worth based on this rigid definition of what is 'enough,'" said Scott McGrath, a social studies teacher at ORHS whom I've talked to about these struggles.

This relentless desire for validation often leads me to compare myself to others, making me feel like I always have to be meeting the standards of those around me to prove that I'm worthy of existing alongside them. Personally, a significant source of comparison for me has been my older brother, Matthew Laliberte ('21). As the younger sibling to someone who became a private pilot at the age of eighteen, it's hard not to diminish my own successes, especially when they're not as impressive in my mind.

Matthew said, "I think you definitely feel pressure to be as good or better than those around you out of fear of being considered a weak link or odd one out." While I can't fly a plane, I do have school—in reality, that's all I have. Even looking at Matthew's aca-

*"I would rather be miserable than
deemed not good enough."*

to figure out why I'm like this. In hopes of getting some answers, or at least a different perspective on my perfectionism, I decided to talk to those close to me about my experience.

My mom, Susan Laliberte, said, "You need to realize that the world is not going to end if you don't do as well as you think you should. Whether you graduate first or last, you're getting the same degree. You need to make sure you're taking time for yourself to relax and have fun because, in the end, those are the important things, and the things which will help you to better yourself." My mom feels I don't let myself prioritize anything other than school, making it the main focus of my life and, therefore, my identity.

Although this was hard to come to terms with at first, my mom was right. Unlike other people in my life who have cool hobbies to channel, school has always been the only option I have to prove myself. I had quit all of my sports by seventh grade and didn't have any other consistent outlet to achieve in. Because of this, I have

demic career, I was always hearing from others how smart and how great of a student he was. He made the top ten (and that is something to be proud of!), but I always felt like to be worthy of praise myself, I had to do as well—or better—than him.

Even when I'm not comparing myself to others, it feels like I'm continuously competing with myself. If I get a 98 during the first quarter of a class, I automatically feel pressured to get a 98 or better in the next quarter. This is extremely unrealistic, but once I prove I can do something once, I refuse to let myself 'slip' and do less than before. I'm constantly trying to one-up myself, but there's only so high a grade can go, and there's only so far I can push myself before I break. When I think about it, it doesn't make sense. Each quarter has different assignments, different assessments, and different priorities. It isn't a copy-paste experience, so why should I expect my grade to be? I want those around me to see that I'm striving to do my best and grow as a student, but this has quickly turned into a

cycle of unhealthy obsession and unrealistic standards.

There are many nights when I feel paralyzed by school, staring at the wall for hours. As I was trying to write this article, I got stuck. I stared at my computer for three hours, willing myself to write. As I sat, I was pleading with myself, begging my brain to let me write something, literally anything. But I've been so scared that this article won't be enough that I couldn't seem to move. On the outside, I look bored and lazy, but on the inside, my mind is going at a hundred miles a minute, frustration consuming me.

School causes so much anxiety that I have found myself in an endless, vicious cycle of procrastination. I want so badly to do everything perfectly that I avoid my assignments in fear of failure. I live by the mindset of 'if I don't start something, I can't mess it up.' How can I do something wrong if I don't do it at all?

"The same people I am trying to impress are the same people who wish I would stop."

My best friend, Sarah Boler ('23), thinks that procrastination is one of my biggest issues when it comes to my perfectionism. "The biggest issue I see is that you're so scared of being wrong that you can't ever just go for it. So, you procrastinate a lot, and the entire time you're procrastinating, you're worrying about how the thing you're working on isn't going to be perfect. The more you procrastinate, the worse your perfectionism is, because all you do is think about it and obsess over it more and more," said Boler.

While I still complete my assignments on time, because with late assignments comes lost points, I am always doing them at the last minute—late the night before the due date and even early the morning of. I have had many nights where I am up until 4 am doing work or where I go to bed at midnight and wake back up at 3:30 to finish assignments. Honestly, it's unhealthy, both mentally and physically. It greatly contributes to my poor mental health and, consequently, has affected my physical health. It's clear to me that something has to change, yet I am so scared of being considered less than, or a disappointment, that I continue with these torturous tendencies. I would rather be miserable than deemed not good enough.

While this is something I've struggled with a lot, I know I'm not alone. At Oyster River High School (ORHS), there is a huge cultural pressure to get amazing grades, have the best grade point average, and make top ten within your graduating class. It's always a competition to see who stayed up the latest doing homework, who got the best grade on a test, and who has the highest SAT score. Jason Baker, a school counselor at ORHS, agrees that the ORHS culture surrounding grades can be difficult for students who strive to do well in school. "There are a decent number of high achieving students [at ORHS], which can make it hard not to compare yourself to your peers. Even just through conversation, grades come up and career goals, and plans for after high school. It can be nearly impossible to not constantly evaluate yourself against that and feel the need to keep up with everyone around you."

Among many high achievers at ORHS, there is a continuous battle of comparison and competition with your peers, even when you don't want there to be. If you aren't comparing yourself to others, someone else is. I've literally had another student point to me and my friend before a test and say, "Which one of you is going to do

better?" I find myself getting disappointed when I do worse than someone, even if it's by one point. I begin to spiral, thinking about all the stupid mistakes I made or how I could have done better and put in more effort, even when I spent a ridiculous amount of time and energy on an assignment or project. I hate it because why can't we all just be proud of ourselves for the work we put in? What difference does a 95 versus a 96 really make?

While I know it doesn't matter, knowing and believing are two very different things. I could easily sincerely remind someone else that their best is enough, but for some reason my brain has decided that that doesn't apply to me. I remember sitting with my friend after getting back a test grade for AP Physics. Even though we got the same exact grade, a mediocre 73, I immediately began reminding them about how hard they worked and how hard the class and

specific unit was. I remember feeling proud of them and wishing I could take away their disappointment, when at the same time, I was incredibly disappointed in myself and angry that I didn't do better. When it comes to celebrating accomplishments and acknowledging how hard you tried, my brain has decided that when it comes to me, hard work and perseverance aren't enough to be proud of without a perfect grade accompanying them.

Even though I've committed to a college, and I know I won't be kicked out if I start getting A-'s and B's instead of A's and A+'s, I can't seem to cut myself some slack. I feel like this is my last chance to prove myself, yet I'm not even sure what I'm trying to prove at this point. No one is sitting here monitoring and obsessing over my every grade except me. Quite frankly, no one cares except for me. What others do care about is me—my interests, my well-being, and my happiness—not my every academic score.

While I may not have discovered the perfect solution to my obsession with grades, I did learn something even more valuable. Through my conversations with my friends, family, and teachers, I learned that the same people I am trying to impress are the same people who wish I would stop. They want me to change. They would rather I get average grades and put less of myself into my schoolwork, if it meant that I was happy and able to separate myself from school. At the end of the day, they just want me to be happy.

Looking back at my ninth-grade self, I understand that there's nothing I could tell her to "fix" this. My perfectionism is part of my identity, and I don't think that's something that will change anytime soon. But I wish I could tell her to truly live instead of just exist. Take the time to find things you're passionate about, aside from school, because those are the things which will make it easier to deal with the stress of perfection. Instead of bottling it all up, talk to people. The people who care about you want to help you, and dealing with it all alone will only make the already isolating experience so much worse. While this will always be a part of me, that doesn't mean it has to consume me. I realize I don't have a time machine to go back and tell all of this to 14-year-old Sarah, but if anything, I think I need to hear this just as much, if not more. I need to learn to take my own advice, so I can truly begin to live. **M**

- Sarah Laliberte

Title Courtesy of Taylor Swift

PROFILES

This section is dedicated to the wonderful staff leaving ORHS this year. Thank you.

- MOR staff





Celebrating — Stetson

After 33 years of teaching, beloved Oyster River High School (ORHS) teacher Cathi Stetson is ready to retire.

Stetson has done it all since she began teaching in 1990. She has taught a wide array of subjects, starting with business, short-hand, and typewriting, and later moving on with the times to teach photoshop, graphic design, and typing. She's expanded past these subjects too, as the director for ORHS' musicals!

Stetson always knew she wanted to be a teacher. "I was four years old, and in our kitchen was a chalk board on the wall, and I'd do math, and teach my family verbs during dinner," Stetson said. "Last year, I was in the top ten semi-finalists for New Hampshire's Teacher of the Year program."

Stetson graduated from Portsmouth High School in 1980 and remembers being active in her school's marching band of over 250 students, playing the trumpet. "We'd go to Patriots games, and we'd be sitting on the sidelines when we weren't marching," Stetson said. Memories of high school band would follow her and remain positive. Stetson even says she will be participating in an alum marching band at Portsmouth High School sometime soon.

At first, Stetson followed her love of music and majored in

Music Education at Plymouth State University (PSU). Stetson surrounded herself with like-minded, music-obsessed young adults. One day, though, things clicked. "I wanted to be a business teacher," Stetson said. But things weren't exactly set in stone. "I changed my major three times in one semester," she added.

Not ready to let go of music, Stetson kept a Music minor while at PSU, continuing to learn more about her creative side. "One day it was just sort of like, 'oh, I can sing,'" Stetson said. Finding a love in singing was Stetson's gateway into musical theatre. Stetson participated in the chorus at PSU, but wasn't keen on musicals yet.

"I didn't really get into musicals until I was in my thirties," Stetson said. She found herself participating in productions with her husband and son, and theatre soon became a big part of Stetson's life.

"The biggest show I ever did was the *Titanic* musical, and I got a personalized passenger in real life. We all had people's names and identities—it just stuck with me forever," Stetson said. "During musicals, you become that person, and sometimes it takes a while to get out of that."

Aside from her love of theatre, Stetson has an obvious love for teaching. "I learned how to teach typewriting and short-

**"Everything that
she's worked for
lives within us."**

hand before there were a whole lot of computers,” Stetson said. “I did my student teaching at Winnacunnet High School and hated every minute of it. I swore I would never teach,” she added. “So, I got my accounting degree, and was a bursar for a community college in Pennsylvania for 12 years, but then I got my teaching bug around 1990.”

Filling in for professors turned into long-term substitute teaching, which quickly turned into a full-time position as a business teacher at Conrad Weiser High School in Pennsylvania, where she worked for almost 20 years.

When Stetson moved back to New Hampshire, she was lucky enough to find her a job quickly as the technology integrator at Oyster River Middle School (ORMS). For three years, Stetson worked with kids and faculty members at ORMS, teaching everybody how to utilize technology, before transitioning to teaching classes at ORHS.

Here at ORHS, Stetson teaches Introduction to Adobe, Introduction to Programming with Python, Introduction to Programming with Java, and Introduction to Computer Science.

Aside from teaching many classes, Stetson has also advised many clubs here at ORHS, past and present. When asked about her biggest contributions here, Stetson said, “I’m sorry to quote a musical, but, ‘I’m just a girl who can’t say no.’”

“My first clubs were a photography club, then we had a Women in Leadership club... I’ve been the Dance Team’s advisor for awhile,” Stetson said. “I also do CodeRunners, and our Computer National Honors Society. Oh yeah, and the musical,” she added.

The musical may be the most time-consuming of the bunch, involving hours of planning and rehearsals. Stetson’s first musical here at ORHS didn’t exactly go to plan. “My first musical we had at ORHS was called *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, which was in 2020, so, you know, COVID shut that down,” Stetson said. “The year after, we didn’t do any-

thing because we weren’t really in school, but last year we got to do *Charlie Brown*,” she added.

This year, however, the ORHS production of *Beauty and the Beast* fulfilled everything Stetson (and the community) had been waiting to see. Without any restrictions or barriers from COVID, the musical exceeded the expectations of many, including Stetson herself. “We start working on the musical in October, so it takes hundreds and hundreds of hours to prepare. Last week, I said to someone, ‘I just can’t stop thinking about *Beauty and the Beast*,’ because it was just so wonderful and so special. I feel like I left that little legacy behind for them.”

Cast members and choreographers Amelia Rury (‘25) and

Grace Kasper (‘25) agree with this sentiment. “Her legacy and everything that she’s worked for lives within us,” Kasper said.

Community members, families and friends of actors, and students alike flocked to the auditorium to see the production. Without Stetson’s hard work and dedication, not only to the musical itself but to her students as well, the production would not have been so memorable for everyone.

Cast members from *Beauty and the*

Beast described unconditional support from Stetson through the entirety of the production. From auditions to rehearsals, from curtain call to curtain close, Stetson was a continual advocate for each of the students’ needs within the group.

“When we were starting to get into the show, I was taking on a lot more responsibility than I expected. I ended up doing a lot of costuming and behind the scenes work for the show, and Mrs. Stetson reached out and told me she always wants her students to feel credited for the work they do, which led her to sort of promote me to the role of student director,” Rury said.

Kasper agreed with this, saying, “she’s just the kind of person that you feel like you can talk to when there’s a lot go-



ing on. She's really understanding and makes sure each person feels heard," Kasper said.

Rury stressed the importance of having a personable director such as Stetson. "She threw herself into the show and, by the end of it, [the cast] definitely felt like she was somebody they could go to," she said.

This support is not just reserved for students participating in clubs that Stetson advises. Eleanor Raspa ('23) and Deepthi Onkaram ('23) have been participating in an Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) with Stetson this year. Raspa had signed up to take a Graphic Design class with Stetson, but there weren't enough students signed up to officially run the class.

Expressing this disappointment to Stetson only once—and on the first day they had met—Stetson offered to run a Graphic Design ELO, just for Onkaram and Raspa, which required giving up some of her own planning time.

Onkaram, who has taken all of the classes Stetson teaches at ORHS, said, "there's very minimal struggle in Stetson's classes and in this ELO. She's very laid back and I've always felt that if we needed help with something she was right there." Onkaram added, "I was already comfortable with her as a teacher and

work at the middle school eight years ago," She added.

In preparation for the musical, Olberg and Stetson worked together closely, rehearsing the songs within the production. Olberg commented on her own contributions, saying, "Generally, I would come in and work with the music, watch run-throughs [of the musical], stuff like that."

And don't worry, similar to how Kasper and Rury believe that Stetson's legacy will live on in future musicals, Olberg believes so as well. "She's one of the most important teachers I've ever met. She's just always trying to help and empower people... I'd like to believe that she's built something really strong. I think once you start something like that it doesn't necessarily fall away because of one human, if you have the right humans in place to hold everything," Olberg said. "It's hard to know where it's going to go, but I would hope that we carry on what Stetson started," she added.

In terms of retirement, as most people close chapters of their lives, they hope they have left good and lasting impressions on those around them. This hope is incredibly high in teachers, given that many retiring teachers have educated generation after generation, holding hope throughout the entire endeavor

"She's one of the most important teachers I've ever met. She's just always trying to help and empower people."

knew how she supported her students."

Raspa echoed Onkaram, saying that Stetson's "support is very self-directed. So, she helps us, but also lets us do what we're interested in."

Raspa and Onkaram both agreed that Stetson is unique in the sense that not many teachers would offer up an ELO to a student they didn't know, let alone only to two students.

"I feel like a lot of teachers probably wouldn't take the time to do an ELO with only two students, so Mrs. Stetson definitely stands out in that way," Onkaram said.

Aside from classwork, if you've met Stetson, you know how kind and personable she is. "[Stetson] could definitely be somebody I go to if I needed support. She's very transparent with her students, which allows for them to feel more comfortable with her," Onkaram said.

Aside from students, Stetson has cultivated friendships with many faculty members in the building. One notable example is Ms. Olberg, the chorus teacher at ORMS and ORHS.

"She was my first friend [in the district]," Olberg said. "Her office was right down the hall from my room when she used to

that they're leaving some kind of impression. Stetson said, "I think every teacher hopes that they've given you something that you can take out into the world. I just want everybody to have a happy career and happy life. I just hope they remember me as somebody who made them laugh."

Post-retirement, Stetson plans to continue working. "I am a photographer and I work for a photography studio. I usually do senior portraits, families, and newborn photography," Stetson said, expressing excitement about these new plans. "Some of these babies can be just a couple of hours old. Being a grandmother of 10 [kids], I'm thrilled."

Aside from that, Stetson says she also plans on getting her drone pilot's license so she can do real estate photography as well.

So, after 33 years, Stetson is ready to lose her "teaching bug," as she called it. "I've only been teaching up here for a few years, but it's time to retire," she said. "Onto my next dream job." **M**

- Ava Gruner

Images courtesy of Zoe Selig and Cathi Stetson



After hearing the rumors all over the place I knew I had to go directly to Mr. Maynard and get my answer. I tried to drag it out of him for 20 minutes, but ultimately had to ask directly. With a noticeable sigh of frustration at the truth coming out, he confirmed the rumors. Almost 40 years after making his Oyster River coaching debut, Don Maynard is moving on to the next chapter of his life: retirement.

Maynard's career in Oyster River has carried him through countless phases of his personal life—from getting married, to having kids and watching them grow up, to becoming a grandfather. Throughout his 38 years at Oyster River, Maynard has filled many roles, including reserve coach, athletic director, and his longest-lasting position of Exercise and Physiology and Wellness (EPW) teacher.

My first period class freshman year was EPW with Maynard and his coworkers in the EPW department, Victoria Sickler and John Morin. As a timid freshman starting her high school career from a laptop in her dining room, I was instantly relaxed as I joined the Teams meeting. I credit much of that to Maynard because he immediately smiled, joked around as if we had all known him for years, and dove into his daily trivia. It was clear why he was here: he's a sports fanatic.

Maynard wanted to be a Physical Education teacher because he has always loved sports and played everything he could growing up: basketball, soccer, and baseball. After high school, Maynard attended Norwich University and

got a degree in physical education. He played basketball in college before joining the military and eventually getting his Master's degree. While Maynard admits it would have been nice to have a higher-paying job, he doesn't know what else he would have done, especially since he can't sit still.

Maynard's career has always been a driving factor in his life outside of school with how much time he spent with his family. He made sure that his kids felt like they had a choice about whether they wanted to play sports, but they all chose to play. Maynard was able to coach all of them, and as a coach, he understood the importance of commitment to teams. He had shown them before they started playing that, during the season, you don't slack off on your team. This meant that the family didn't really go on vacations during his kids' sports seasons because of games and practices that they had already committed to.

Maynard said that his time teaching has been great, and he has been really

fortunate to have wonderful coworkers who have been friends in and out of the gym. Morin has worked with Maynard for over 20 years and has loved it. He said that together, "we've had a lot of experiences." Morin explained that "some of the other departments might be a department, but they don't necessarily do things together, at least not as much as we do." The two consider themselves friends beyond just coworkers.

According to Morin, Maynard almost never misses work, is always early and ready to go, and can't sit still. "He



Maynard hugging his wife, Cheryl, after a big championship win.

will organize things that have already been organized just so he can spend time organizing,” Morin recalled. “I don’t know if it’s because he wants his brain to work and keep himself in check, but he has reorganized his organized desk drawers multiple times.”

Morin also talked about his friend’s affinity for fixing things, saying, “He loves tape. He loves glue. He will tape anything or glue anything back together more than anybody I have ever seen. He’s saved the district so much money for so many years fixing everything, saving everything, repurposing everything. Nobody will ever understand how much stuff we have kept alive for so many years.” Maynard fixes arrows and targets, regrips rackets, and builds all sorts of athletic equipment for the sake of his students.

The gym is always a busy place and the EPW teachers all have a unique position in which they get to interact with every student who comes to ORHS as a freshman. Maynard hopes that all his students understand that he has expectations and is going to call out the “knuckleheads.” If a kid comes in causing trouble, he is going to do something about it because he understands that it isn’t fair to other kids in the class to have to put up with it or for them to get away with poor behavior. “He’s tough on kids because he cares,” said Jordyn March (‘23), a member of Maynard’s advisory.

When I asked Maynard what his favorite memory at ORHS was, he immediately went, “oh goodness!” He couldn’t pick a favorite because he loves just getting to see kids working hard and being successful in their endeavors. One moment he mentioned was from the days in the old gym when a 6’6” student would come in and play basketball

every day during lunch. For the longest time he couldn’t dunk, but one day he came in and ran to the hoop, ball in hand, and put it right through the net. “I think he did five laps around the gym running and screaming with his arms up in the air because he was so excited,” said Maynard.

Over his nearly 40 years at Oyster River, Maynard has seen lots of changes in the school environment and culture over the years. Looking back on the state of the high school, he said, “we’re really good but we used to be great.” He misses the days where Oyster River was the school where people came to see what was new in the world of education. Now, he feels that this isn’t the case anymore. With that said, he is filled with pride thinking of all the accomplishments of his students and colleagues over the years and is excited for what is to come for ORHS.

Looking ahead, Maynard is excited to spend more time with his family because he still feels like he’s at a point where he can do things physically, like handy work, hiking, and playing with his granddaughter. “There are still bills to pay,” however, so he hopes to continue with some of the handywork he has been doing throughout the summers and will reluctantly be joining Facebook for that endeavor.

I have come to know Maynard through classes and random visits to the gym, and I’m grateful for the fact that he always has your back and is willing to talk to you about anything. The gym won’t be the same without his presence but his impact will continue to be felt by future students at ORHS, and we wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors! **M**

- Delaney Nadeau

Images courtesy of Don Maynard



Bruce is Finally Loose



After going through six keyboards and three laptops within one year, I've gotten to know Bruce Stocker quite well. Although the need for replacement wasn't entirely my fault—I've always been cursed with technology—I'm not alone in this experience.

Stocker has worked with many people, both staff and students, consistently making a positive impact and bringing humor to his role in Information Technology (IT) Services. However, after twenty years within the Oyster River Cooperative School District (ORCSD), Stocker, with his immense patience and quick-witted personality, has decided to retire.

When Stocker first entered the IT field after a lifelong fascination with electronics, he began working in a corporate setting, but was eventually laid off after 9/11. After working at a golf course and spending some time at home, he started at Oyster River in September of 2003, learning to love the position he's been in ever since.

Celeste Best, a science teacher and the Technology Integrator at Oyster River High School (ORHS), has worked with Stocker since the day he set foot in the building. While Best was unsure of how she'd feel about the "new kid on the block," she immediately loved Stocker and was excited to work with him. "I thought he was hysterical from the get-go. Sometimes when you have an outsider coming to education, you're not always sure how they're going to fit in if they haven't come from the education system. Initially it was like, 'oh, he'll just be a typical business guy,' but once we met him, everybody honestly fell in love with his personality."

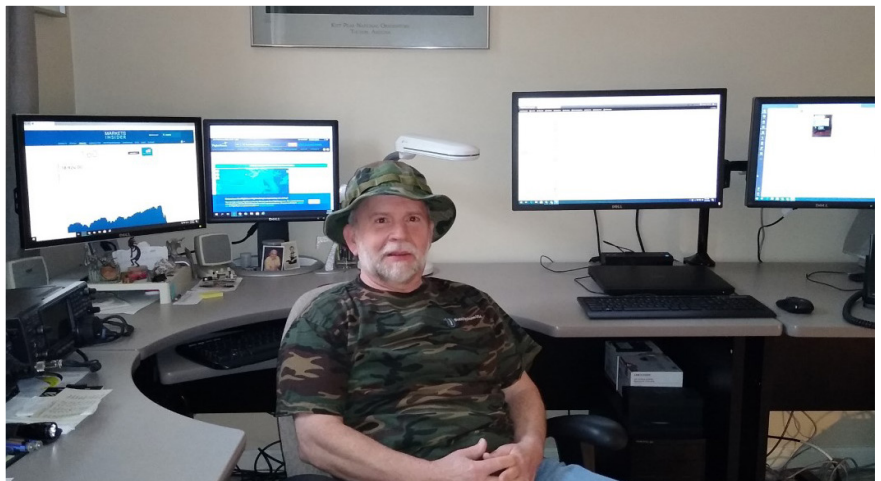
Similarly, Lisa Harling, the Library Media Specialist at ORHS, noticed Stocker's sarcastic humor and his willingness to help others. "He's always been incredibly helpful and such a nice coworker to have. He is probably way overqualified for his job, but he doesn't show it in a rude or stuck-up way. He's incredibly honest with what he thinks



will work and does his best to make sure that his help matches our expectations.”

While Stocker enjoys the IT part of his job, he truly loves interacting with the staff and students. “I always try to break the ice when working with staff and students who I may not know as well, to make them feel more comfortable. It’s important they know I’m there to help. I don’t want them to think I’m a stuffed shirt or a robot. It’s nice when people come and talk to me so we can work together and figure out whatever they need,” said Stocker.

There is no doubt that Stocker works to connect with others in need of technological help, consistently finding ways to bring humor into the sometimes-stressful situations. As a technologically challenged student myself, I became a frequent flier in Stocker’s office (or as he likes to call it, “the tech hive”), my visits quickly becoming a running joke. “It was like a revolving door with you coming in. Every time the door opened; it was like ‘Sarah? Is that you?’” said Stocker. While keyboards three through five were particularly aggravating, as they occurred within ten minutes of each other, Stocker immediately joked that my broken keyboard collection



should be framed as a graduation present, easing my stress and frustration.

This is a quality that staff also recognize. “He’s honestly just a really great person. Bruce is one of those people who’s willing to make fun of themselves to ease the tension or make others laugh,” said Best. “One of the funniest memories [we share] is from the beginning of remote learning. I was really stressed and had been up since four in the morning answering panicked emails, when all of the sudden an email from him came in, with a picture of him all set up, saying that he was ‘preparing for battle.’ It made me laugh so hard.”

When Stocker officially announced his retirement, there were a lot of mixed emotions, especially throughout the ORHS staff. “When he said he was going to retire, I was happy for him, because I know he has activities which he really loves to do. So, I know he’ll be busy, and he’ll be doing the things that he loves. But I felt bad for the library right away because he helps us in numerous ways. I was happy for him and sad for us because I think he’s going to be incredibly difficult to replace,” said Harling.

When I first asked Stocker how he knew he was ready to retire, he was quick to joke that he’s “of legal age.”

However, he continued by talking about all of the things he’s excited to do that he doesn’t want to push off much longer, including hiking and land conservation work.

“I just figured the time is now. I’m still healthy. I still like to do stuff. I’m hoping to volunteer for the Southeast Land Trust, or the Barrington Conservation Commission, which do a lot [in terms of] land management and conservation. I want to go hiking and help maintain trails. Really, I’m excited to do things which will keep me outdoors instead of sitting in front of the computer.”

Even with this excitement, Stocker will miss some of the simpler things which came with his job, like his daily routine, and the 5am snow day calls from Superintendent James Morse.

There is no doubt as to whether Stocker will be missed within the ORCSD community. “I’m going to really, really miss him. I’m super happy for him, but at the same time I’m super sad for me and us here at the high school. His role will definitely be really tough shoes to fill,” said Best. **M**

- Sarah Laliberte
*Images Courtesy of
 Bruce Stocker & Celeste Best*



Golding Hour

“Read the room.” During advisory on most days, this verbal sentiment echoes through Anne Golding’s classroom as her freshman advisees make rambunctious remarks.

Upon first meeting Golding, a special education teacher and the varsity field hockey coach at Oyster River High School (ORHS), students and players alike sometimes often find themselves intimidated by her determination. But, once they get to know her, students love Golding for her caring nature, her direct and realistic advice, and her charismatic humor. However, after working at ORHS for nearly 15 years, Golding is leaving the teaching profession. What she is also leaving, though, is a lasting impact on students, players, and teachers alike.

Golding never intended to become a teacher. Instead, she worked in hospitality for nearly 15 years prior to starting at ORHS. Shortly out of high school, Golding became a waitress, then bartender, and eventually manager at Kelley’s Row in Dover (now in Somersworth) before continuing work in hospitality. There, Golding says, “I learned a lot, but mostly I learned that I loved working with people.”

varsity field hockey coach. Golding started coaching field hockey at ORHS in 2014 as an assistant varsity and a JV coach and assumed the role of head varsity coach in 2017.

To the delight of her players, Golding will remain the varsity field hockey coach despite her departure from teaching. “Just being able to [coach] is something that I enjoy profoundly. I’m not giving that up.”

Golding’s coaching has led the field hockey program to grow tremendously during her time as coach, both in numbers and in ability. “We’ve made it to the playoffs for the past five to ten years [because of her] coaching,” said Jordyn March (’23), a senior who’s played on varsity for Golding since her sophomore year.

This growth has been one of the most memorable things for Golding to witness. “It’s been a very long time coming, and it’s really been a community effort. [...] Their willingness to really do what is necessary to continue that growth in that legacy has been an awesome thing to watch,” she said.

Golding’s determination is very apparent to her players. “She never gets sidetracked, and she always is wanting to win, empow-

“Kids love her and really respect her.”

Taking a break from hospitality work, Golding began working at ORHS as a paraeducator. “It was right up the street from where [my] boys were in school, and it had similar hours to their day.” Having no initial intention of becoming a teacher, Golding described her eventual teaching position at ORHS as a “happy accident.”

As a member of ORHS’ special education department, Golding is responsible for teaching students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). In her class, Study Skills, she covers broad topics like overall executive functioning skills to narrow topics such as math or other specific course material that students may be struggling with. Through this role, Golding not only helps teach the curricula of students’ classes, but also teaches students how to succeed.

In addition to teaching at ORHS, Golding is also the ORHS

ering us to win,” said March “I was kind of intimidated by her [in the beginning] because she’s very focused and determined, so she always had this serious look on her face. But, once you get to know her and she opens up a little bit, she’s very funny and super nice.”

Behind Golding’s determination, and her sunglasses, is a strong care for her players. “She can always tell if we’re having a bad day and she’ll pull us aside and ask how we are,” said March. “She always offered to help connect us with people if we needed to talk to people, or to help us with schoolwork, or, if we were [struggling] with time management, she would just help out with whatever you needed.”

Golding’s care is shown in her classroom, too, through her teaching style and personality. “She’s very real with kids,” said Cam Calato, a paraeducator who works alongside Golding. “She just lays it

on the line, very black-and-white, sometimes in a way that I don't know if kids are used to. But I think it's a really effective way to work with students and help prepare them for their future."

"Another great thing about her is that she's not afraid to say, 'This is what I think, and here's why,'" Calato added.

Students greatly appreciate Golding for this. "Students love her—how she's very real with them—kids respect that so much, and that's what they really want. They don't want things sugar-coated; they don't want things hidden from them. They want to know how things are, and she gives them that," said Calato.

"I've learned from so many different people. Maybe not huge things, but even the smallest things—it's a pretty unique experience. Small things are important."

This direct, realistic advice that Golding gives students in her teaching leaves a lasting impact, especially on younger students like her freshmen advisees. "There's sort of a running joke in advisory with the statement 'read the room,' which [Golding] has to say very frequently to people," said Calato. "But—as far as life lessons go—it's true. Especially dealing with [...] young people, just helping them broaden their perspective to beyond just [themselves]; to look around and say, 'okay, what's going on in the room? What's appropriate for me to do right now?'"

Jennifer Weeks, an English teacher at ORHS who's friends with Golding, said that Golding also taught students the life-long skill of being accountable for themselves. "[She] really pushes her students to be responsible for themselves and to take action in their own lives. I think she pushes them to get out of their shell a little bit more than they would otherwise."

Weeks has learned this accountability for herself, too. "Over the years, [Golding] has definitely rubbed off on me, in a good way. I'm more willing to give my opinion on things and stand up [for myself] when I need to." For faculty and students alike, Golding's personality leaves a positive impression on everyone.

This is driven by Golding's outgoing nature. "She's very much a go-getter. And she's always willing to try new things and put herself out there, and I just really admire that," said Weeks.

Sometimes being a go-getter can be a lot, though. Golding described herself as "one of those people that, even when I'm not working, I'm still working," especially during the field hockey season. However, the hustle and bustle has been worth it, as Golding finds motivation in working with others.

As Golding reflected on her time at ORHS, she said her biggest accomplishments were "the relationships I've built with students,

with families, and with my peers and colleagues." Her positions at ORHS, both teaching and coaching, have allowed her to learn just as much from her students, players, and colleagues as they've learned from her. "I've learned from so many different people. Maybe not huge things, but even the smallest things—it's a pretty unique experience. Small things are important."

Whether it's taking the time to notice when someone may be facing a challenge in life, or just keeping snacks in her desk for students who need them, the small things are essential for Golding. "Fruit snacks: wildly popular. Especially with the freshmen," said

Golding. "When people are hungry, they have a really hard time focusing. It's a small thing, but it sometimes makes a huge difference."

These small things do make a world of difference to students. Another reason why, in Calato's words, "Kids love her and really respect her."

As she leaves teaching, Golding still hopes to find herself in a "helping" profession. Her husband is a division chief with Dover Fire and Rescue, so "the two of us have spent many moons in helping professions, and we're kind of just looking forward to shifting gears a little bit," she said. Golding holds a license as a part-time realtor and will likely pursue that as her next career.

Plus, as a self-proclaimed 'home body,' Golding will now have more time to focus more on her family. "I just love spending time with my boys, you know, just being able to enjoy that aspect of life has become really important the last couple of years."

"You have to give yourself some permission to fail."

Now Golding can take some time to enjoy the small things, rather than providing them for students.

Golding has one last piece of advice for her students. "You have to give yourself some permission to fail." She added, as something she's learned from teaching her students, "being kind to yourself leads you to being kind and having empathy for others." **M**

- Justin Partis

Photos courtesy of Anne Golding



On Hawley-Day

My first impression of Dave Hawley came long before I met him, on the day I got my class schedule for freshman year. I told my friend's older sister I had Mr. Hawley for World Cultures, and she responded, "Oh, I love Mr. Hawley! He has *such* dad vibes."

This assessment certainly wasn't wrong, but it barely scratched the surface of how much Hawley means to our school. After 22 years of telling bad jokes, excitedly unrolling maps, hating on his home state of Ohio, and truly touching the lives of his students, Hawley is retiring from his position as a social studies teacher at Oyster River High School.

A key aspect of Hawley's teaching is the connections he makes with his students. "There's nary a week that goes by where I don't connect with a former student outside of school. I've had them in my life for years—a lot of my students see me in their 30s and even in their 40s now. It's quite lovely. Those initial connections, they haven't gotten old," Hawley said.

Former student Hannah Muessig ('22) attested to this, saying, "by his stories, you can tell he was once a teenager too, and that he knows what we're going through, which is something I really liked about him. He's pretty relatable. I would come to him about anything that wasn't even a part of his class. He's just very welcoming and knowledgeable."

Hawley explained that "the most important thing is to create a connection with

the course, and tries to connect with students through analogies, relating to their own interests when they struggle with class material.

These connections are also built by Hawley's background as a student and adventurer. Growing up, he hated school, prioritizing drumming and skiing over just about anything else. After high school, Hawley spent time skiing in Colorado before going to college, later leading outdoor adventure programs and travelling to New Zealand before becoming a teacher. All of these experiences have given Hawley a wide range of interests and experiences to connect with students over, as well as a heightened level of empathy for students who would rather be skiing than in history class.

Even the walls of Hawley's classroom are a testament to the connections he has with his students. "Every single thing on the wall is a gift from one of my students," Hawley said, "and they all have an inside joke to them." From student artwork of years past to a lab coat for use in scientific emergencies to a giant golden shovel, just entering into Hawley's classroom makes you feel like you're part of a long line of students who have enjoyed his teaching.

In addition, Hawley said he avoids "making my ideas or my opinions part of the class. I think that engenders a certain amount of safety and trust. I'm not trying to preach."

In the many classes I've taken with Hawley, I've been impressed by his talent at keeping students engaged and talking through carefully-worded questions while somehow not including any of his own opinions. Hawley manages to make daunting topics feel approachable, so that his students are able to discuss deep political and social issues maturely and with confidence.

This is an incredibly important skill to build, pointed out Muessig. She said that Hawley "prepared us well for the real world. With all this news, and some of it's very biased, he really taught us how to research and find good sources and understand a well-rounded idea of certain topics. He also got us to understand how events lead to the big issues we have today."

Shawn Kelly, an English teacher who co-taught American Studies with Hawley for eight years, noted that Hawley "stood out as someone who could both manage and instigate really difficult content." Kelly recalled that "he always impressed me as deeply knowledgeable. He would bring that into the classroom, but it was usually through asking students questions—it wasn't just like 'take out your notebooks and take notes on this.'"

Hawley has an incredible ability to make the mundane interesting. His passion and excitement for any topic (especially maps) make it so you can't help but be excited with him, even if you're suffering through five million pages of Howard Zinn for American Studies. I've frequently overheard students complaining about something along the lines of, 'ugh, I have history next period—but



at least it's with Mr. Hawley so he'll make it interesting.'

"He's so great at leading a class discussion and having students engage with him instead of just lecturing," said Sarah Lyons ('22), another of Hawley's former students. "This is a great skill, and in college professors, it's a rare one. I appreciate it more now after taking college classes where some of the professors are not the greatest. I'm like, 'ugh, I want Mr. Hawley to teach me again!'"

This talent at drawing in students comes not only through Hawley's class discussions, but also from his humor. While he frequently grades his own jokes at a C+ (followed with a deadpan "at least that's better than my GPA in high school!"), most students know and love Hawley for his comedy.

"He's really funny. Like, students have fun in his class," said Kelly, who was frequently the other half of Hawley's stand-up routines and slapstick bits in American Studies. "I think that goes a long way when you're a student, if you have this person who seems to think about you as a person and care about you, but also you can joke around and relate with."

Matt Pappas, one of Hawley's friends and colleagues in the social studies department, has taught in the classroom next door to Hawley for almost his whole career. "His sarcasm is perfect," Pappas said. "He has an A+ in sarcasm, and he uses it to improve the educational atmosphere of all of his students. Whether it's even just casual conversation with friends and colleagues or a conversation with students, the sarcasm is always there."

I had always thought that the humor was just who Hawley is (and it is!), but in my interview with him, I learned that his jokes are much more strategic than he lets on. "I use humor a lot, because it can break ice. It can also warm things up a lot," he explained. "But here's the thing, you have to strike this balance between your sense of humor and potentially being perceived as mean, because humor can be perceived as mean if you're just railing on someone. What I try to do is more self-deprecating humor: I turn it on myself and just softly address it that way, and that's a safe way to avoid it."

Over time, Hawley has taken student feedback and refined his in-school humor to be less sarcastic—a testament to his care in listening to student feedback and focus on always improving. Still, his silly, occasionally over-the-top style of teaching shines through every day in the classroom.

In my interview with Pappas, he started laughing at the recollection that "being neighbors next to him for 20 years in our old

classrooms, there were so many times where he'd just yell and scream. And I'm like, 'What's going on in there? Is he torturing his students?' But it was just whatever he was doing at the time. Just the sarcasm, exaggerating his story, or what have you."

Hawley's silliness balances out with an authenticity that's rare to find anywhere else. When a student talks to him, he *listens*, and makes everyone who sits in his classroom feel valued and cared

about. As Sofia Self ('23), one of Hawley's philosophy students, put it, "he's the kind of teacher that really cares about the individual students. He's not just there to get the topic done. He's got more emotion in his work than most teachers."

As for what's next, Hawley plans to take the summer off to clear his head, and then will travel with his wife (and potentially also his adorable dog, Mallory). He hasn't chosen a definite first destination yet, but is contemplating sailing in Croatia, hiking in Europe, or exploring America's national parks.

"I realized it's time for a change, and I'm happy to do it now," Hawley said. "Once I'm done with the first six months of travel, I'm probably going to switch careers. No idea what I'll do, but it will not be in education."

With his time as an educator coming to an end, I asked Hawley what mark he hopes to have left on Oyster River. He replied, "I hope there's a mark on any of these students to be more thoughtful."

This generation is more thoughtful in many ways. But, I don't really need a mark on the larger community. I love the idea of, 'do your work, and when it's done, leave it.' That's a beautiful Taoist saying. It's not about me, you know? I'm here for you people, I'm not here for me. I mean yeah, I'm getting a lot of satisfaction out of being here, but the most satisfaction I see is when students get something out of the deal."

It's hard to see Hawley go, and, to be honest, his retirement is making me really glad that I'm graduating along with him. According to Pappas, "anyone who has had a class with him knows that, in Mr. Hawley, you probably have one of the

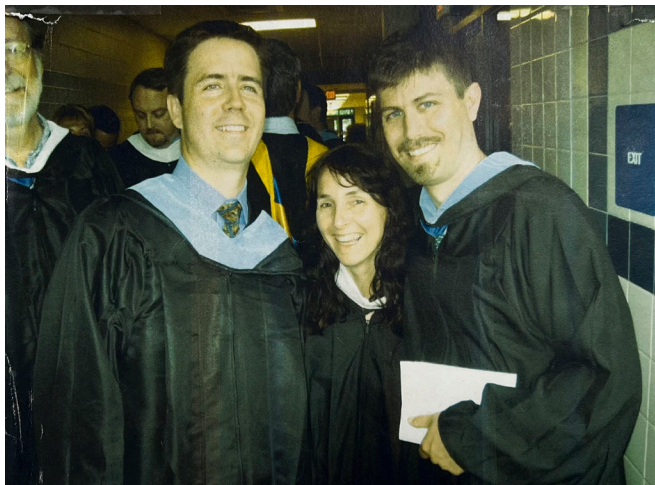
best teachers one would ever have. Filling his shoes here at Oyster River is not going to be easy. In fact, I feel sorry for anyone who does step into his shoes because it is going to be very difficult to replace the wisdom of Mr. Hawley, the sarcasm of Mr. Hawley, and even just his ability to connect with students. He just has that gift."

Hawley's retirement is certainly a loss for the future students of Oyster River, but he will surely be spreading thoughtfulness, connection, and a healthy hatred for Ohio anywhere he goes. **M**

- Zoe Selig



Hawley in his first year of teaching—look at that hair!
Image courtesy of Dave Hawley



Hawley with Pam Raiford, his teaching mentor, and Brian Zottoli, another coworker and friend in the Social Studies department
Image courtesy of Dave Hawley



milliken moving On pt. 1

*Stay tuned for “Milliken Moving on Pt. 2”, which has a projected release date of June 2024.

Meeting Milli

Eliza Hall ('25) was running late to school. Power walking, Hall barreled straight into the crosswalk, foregoing the universal parental advice of 'look both ways!' Distracted, she didn't notice the car coming right at her. Mark Milliken, on morning traffic duty, halted the car, "but if he hadn't, I might have gotten run over, 'Regina George-ed' by the car," Hall said. Forever a humble man, Milliken bragged to Hall, "I just saved your life." She responded with equal sass, "why thank you," and rushed off to her class.

Many students have similar first moments with Milliken, most in the lunchroom, nearly all including a small joke he made. Milliken uses lunch duty and a collection of 'dad' jokes to connect and create individual relationships with countless students. Riley Drapeau ('24) first met Milliken in the lunchroom as he went around telling jokes to different tables. "Now we've made a relationship, and he comes around every lunch and hits me in the head with paper," she recounted fondly.

Mike Nicolosi, the student resource officer, commented on Milliken's lunch duty rounds, "his heart and soul has always been how he can connect with kids the most."

Milli in Three Words

When asked to describe Milliken in three words, it was hard for brothers Tyler and Rory Flynn ('24) to boil down such an influential man. The Flynn's are neighbors with the Millikens, and Rory is in Barbara Milliken's advisory, so over time they have become close with the couple. In an attempt to answer the difficult question, Rory took charge, calling him goofy, caring, and strange. "He'll crack dad jokes, he's a marathon runner for no reason, he's just a weird dude, but in all the right ways." Tyler went in a different direction. "The first word that comes to mind is whimsical...I think in a perfect world he would live directly next to Mr. Rogers."

Nicolosi shared this sentiment, saying, "I would describe him as a Care Bear... is that one word? I don't know what color he would be though. I think I'm going to go with red because it's my favorite color."

Mike McCann, the Dean of Students and Faculty and Milliken's partner in crime for eight years, had equal trouble narrowing down Milliken's character into the strict confines of three words. Instead, he decided to offer three phrases: "Super cool dude, really funny guy... community builder," adding that "he really does care about relationships," making his final word count 14.

The Millikens

Milliken joined his wife, Barbara Milliken, at the school eight years ago. For his first year as Dean of Staff at ORHS, he was exclusively referred to as "Monsieur Madame" but over time he made a name for himself: 'Milli.' Whenever Milliken wants to see his wife, he can pop his head into her classroom, which he does quite frequently.

"He comes looking for her a lot... they just joke around a lot," commented Maryellen Moore ('24), a member of Barbara Milliken's advisory. For a while, when Milliken would stop by Barbara Milliken's advisory, Rory would jokingly give him relationship advice. In reality, the Millikens are a walking example of a healthy relationship. "Especially in high school, [where] there are just so many unhealthy relationships... it's good to be able to look at them [as role models]," Rory commented.

The Millikens have taken the school under their wing, becoming an integral part of the school culture. With everyone knowing at least one Milliken personally, the students know they can show up at one of the Millikens' doors and be greeted with open arms. Even the staff notice it. Nicolosi stops by Milliken's office to check in at the beginning of the day and before leaving at the end. "[Barbara Milliken is always] right

around the corner making copies or something... then I get to bombard into their conversations, and it's hilarious. So yeah, I kind of feel like I'm adopted in a way."

With Milliken leaving, "it's like mom and dad are breaking up, and I don't know how I feel about that... it's a weird thought."

Barbara Milliken will not stay long at Oyster River after Milliken leaves. She's planning on graduating with her advisory next year. "We've always been a team. There aren't many things in life that we don't do together, [but], at the same time, I'm going to be happy for him; that he can let go of the stress. And maybe learn some domestic things at home."



Moments with Milli

THE BIG BREAKDOWN:

It was one of the many days this past winter with more ice than snow. The Flynn brothers describe Barbara and Mark, not as the Dean of Staff or longtime teacher, but rather as "the old couple down the street." On this cold snow day, while Rory and Tyler were roaming the streets and salting driveways, they came across a house they recognized as the Millikens'—but with the windows uncharacteristically dark. They approached, unsure of what to expect when they knocked.

A smiling Milliken came to the door, answering while dressed in his warmest pajamas and a pair of socks. "Even though he was wearing pajamas and hanging out in slides, after such a terrible storm, he was still just kind enough to be like 'oh, yeah, come on in, I don't want you guys to get cold.' It shows how deep, and wonderful, and complex his character is," said Tyler.

When the brothers realized the Millikens had lost electricity, they offered to bring them their backup generator. Although it didn't work out, the brothers met Milliken's

son-in-law and dogs, who they swear were all just as wonderful as he is.

A TRASH PROM-POSAL:

Mrs. Milliken is well known for being the driving force behind many of Oyster River's proms. A few years ago, she was in the middle of a department lunch meeting, blissfully unaware of the chaos happening in the cafeteria.

It was prom season, and Mr. Milliken had decided that a prom-posal was well overdue. It was during this meeting when a student came running in, interrupting. "We were eating and one of my junior officers came and said, we're having a problem with the tickets, and we need you to come. And I reluctantly went, because we were talking about something important, and they said 'no, you have to come into the cafeteria,'" said Mrs. Milliken. She said she thought something was really wrong and they needed her help.

"And so I came into the cafeteria and Mr. Milliken was on top of the recycling bin and the entire cafeteria was quiet. And he said, 'Madame! Will you. Go to. THE Prom with me?!' And I said yes and the whole cafeteria started screaming, 'YAYYY'" continued Mrs. Milliken, recounting the story with as much enthusiasm as Mr. Milliken must have given in his proposal.

A ROCK BAND & SOME ROCKIN' FITS:

Mike McCann crooned to the tune of the music as Milliken strummed the electric guitar. 2022 quarter four Coffee House was proud to host the duo. Milliken, who is always doing his best to get involved in student activities and promote school culture, convinced McCann to perform with him. The audience laughed in surprise as the two began. It was an event that made for a great story.

This might have been Milliken and McCann's duo debut, but Milliken was certainly not an amateur when it came to Coffee House performances. He'd done several others leading up to that, building a reputation for being unreserved and always 'bringing it.' Whether it's with a student, a staff member, or a solo, there are always costumes, a guitar in hand, and a wide smile.

For many, this scene inspires the perfect image of Milliken. If described without more context, he almost sounds like Santa. A grandfather figure that has dedicated his life to bringing kids joy and laughter. But

"The guy that's going to wear the light-up cowboy hat or the boas and leis."



Security camera footage of Mr. Milliken proposing on the garbage cans.



Milliken (right) as the football co-captain at Kennett High School.

Santa Claus has nothing on Milliken. Santa tends to stick to a strict, monotonous wardrobe of red suits. Milliken is one of the most adventurous fashion icons of our time. According to McCann, Milliken is “the guy that’s going to wear the light-up cowboy hat or the boas and leis.” He has even created flannel and floral Friday’s here at ORHS. Every Friday, depending on the time of the year, Milliken walks around searching outfits for a hint of one or the other. Here’s to hoping he breaks out some of these staples for this year’s Coffee House performance.

Ta-Ta to Mr. Milliken!

There are some retirements that call for ‘adieu,’ a final goodbye. However, Milliken’s is more of an ‘a bientot,’ see you soon. Officer Nicolosi is already figuring out how to get Milliken to visit again. “Maybe we can do like a—what it’s called? A parent trap. Try to get him back in some capacity.” Although he also joked, “I don’t know if—from a security standpoint—we can allow him back in.”



Nicolosi wasn’t sure right away of what he would say as a goodbye to Milliken. “I don’t know... I guess I’ll honk at him later? I know where he lives so I can just drive by and harass him anytime I want [...] just flash my lights so that he knows it’s me,” but as he continued, he decided he would tell Milliken, “thanks for showing me the amount of compassion you can have in your position, because I think that’s important. My assistant principals were never compassionate, they were very strict, and, ‘beat you with a ruler’... not, like, literally, but figuratively.”

Barbara Milliken will definitely not be saying goodbye for good. She said that one of the difficulties they had working together was coming home at the end of the day with different energy levels. She likes to talk to someone to process and reflect, and Mr. Milliken likes a little bit more work/home separation from the day. Now, she will be going home to a Mr. Milliken who is ready to hear about all of her students’ antics, because the day wasn’t so packed with antics of his own. Instead, he says he will spend his time running, with their very beloved grandson Finn, reading, and hopefully traveling.

But that doesn’t mean the end of the work couple’s career won’t be a sad one. “See, and right now I feel like I’m going to cry. It’s going to be a big hole, but I have to remember that it’s just going to be one more year,” said Mrs. Milliken, who plans on joining him in retirement at the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

The school mom said to our school dad, “Thank you for bringing so much heart to this position, and for being vulnerable, and sharing so much of your life with the kids.” Mrs. Milliken wasn’t done thanking him there. Later she added, “I hope that he’s not too sad. I really think the biggest thing for him is going to be how much he misses you guys. I think [...] that’s not a hole that’s really fillable, because it’s just what Oyster River kids have enabled him to build with them. And I want to thank him for allowing that to happen.”

There are plenty of people who are grateful for the energy that Milliken brings to their day-to-day lives. “It’s nice to have somebody like that nearby so you can [...] make the day just a little bit lighter,” said McCann.

They aren’t the only ones who will miss seeing him at school, though. “I think, if I



could let him know one more thing, I want him to know that he’s laid out a pretty solid blueprint for having a great life; by being honest, by being a kind person. I think he’s shown everyone that happiness in life is achievable,” said Tyler, his voice filled with gratitude.

So, it is with heavy hearts that Oyster River waves goodbye to a man of many names. Whether you know him as Mark Milliken, Monsieur Madame, Milli, Mr. Milliken, or *Markyou’re distracting my class* !, the man of many names has left an impact on this year’s student body and a wake of stories to be transformed into tall tales that’ll be passed on to future classes. We thank him for his kindness, unique sense of humor, hard work, and the love he has poured into his job every day for so many years. We also wish him good luck in his future endeavors and the exciting escapades that are sure to follow him wherever he goes .

On behalf of the Oyster River Cooperative School District, ORHS student body—past, present, and future—and the surrounding community, thank you Milli.

M



- Mia Boyd and Hazel Stasko



It's Been ~~Grand~~ Grant

We decided to do a video in honor of Laurie Grant moving on to new adventures. To watch the video and hear from Laurie about her experience at Oyster River and the Preschool Education Program, as well as some of the people she has made a lasting impact on, scan the QR code!



“She breezed in with a very pregnant belly and a perm...”



“I think it’s really interesting that the kids call her Laurie, but I don’t think she could have it any other way.”

- Sarah Laliberte & Delaney Nadeau

Walking the Tightrope

Trigger Warning: *This article covers multiple sensitive topics, including eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide. If you feel reading about such topics will harm your mental health, please put yourself first and refrain from reading it.*

Due to the nature of these stories, the full names of current high schoolers have been changed for anonymity.

It was midterms week when I rushed into the school library and sat beside M ('24), sorting through my mental to-do list as I frantically pulled crumpled physics notes from my backpack. A heavy air of pre-test nerves smothered sleep-deprived students who stared blankly at textbooks and prayed to the academic gods for a passing grade.

As I was de-crinkling my papers, M flashed a sympathetic half-smile at me. She was dressed in proper midterms attire—tie-dye Crocs and pajama pants—and the skin around her eyes was noticeably irritated from a “brief crying session” she’d had earlier that morning.

I asked her if she was okay, and she simply responded, “Well, you know, school.”

Intrigued by this answer, I wondered if this was *normal* for her. If the pressure to succeed academically frequently induced panic attacks that left her unable to muster sentences or think clearly. She said, “Sure, but I feel like that’s normal for almost all my friends, too.”

With those few words, I was yanked into M’s world and held captive by the idea that this was not a single story, and that there were other kids suffering as much as M was. Wanting to understand this further, I asked M if we could schedule another time to meet. She nodded.

Three days later, I was sitting in the same corner of the library when M and her friend, Katie, sat down at the table beside mine. Although she had agreed to speak with me, I could tell by her nervous glances toward my pages of interview notes that she was regretting her decision. I thought to myself that maybe this was a mistake—that questions requiring someone I barely

knew to unpack their most painful memories were somehow too invasive for a high school reporter to ask.

But just as I was about to stop our interview before it had even begun, M started to speak. I remember the way her eyes wandered as she told me about her battles with academic perfectionism and how during online school, she couldn’t even open her computer without breaking down. She told me about a certain Microsoft Teams call she had freshman year, where she told her school counselor that her anxiety had consumed her life and that she was unsure of how to move forward.

Then, for the first time since our conversation began, M stared directly at me, and everything went quiet. That’s when she told me that things only got worse her sophomore year. “I remember one day, after Driver’s Ed, I was having a full-blown panic attack. My chest was hot. I was just standing there, crying, not breathing.” That’s when M told me her anxiety had become so suffocating that that night, she contemplated suicide.

As she unraveled her life story before me, I watched as tears pooled in her eyes and listened as her voice shuttered between words. Katie reached across the table to grab her hand, and I sat there, not knowing what to do with the weight of this information.

M tells me that she’s better now. That she’s taking medication for her anxiety and speaking to a therapist. But she also says that putting her happiness before academic perfection has been a struggle, even though she knows failing to do so might hurt her.

M is not alone. According to the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), an anonymous survey taken by the ORHS student body and other high school students nationwide, suicidal ideation and attempts have increased since 2019 among ORHS students, notably among girls. Over one third of Oyster River students reported that their “mental health was not good most of the time or always,” with 38% of students saying they “felt sad or hopeless every day

for two or more weeks,” an 11% increase from 2019.

And it’s not just Oyster River. In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics and other children’s health groups joined together to declare a National State of Emergency in Children’s Mental Health. In a Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that noted national YRBS trends from 2011 to 2021, 22% of high school students said they seriously contemplated suicide, a 7% increase from 2011. Additionally, one in 10 high school students reported they attempted to commit suicide one or more times during 2021.

While it’s tempting to attribute these rising numbers to COVID-19, a period of intense isolation never before experienced by teens of previous generations, national data indicate that the pandemic only exacerbated it. According to the CDC, rates of teen depression and anxiety nearly doubled from 2010 to 2019, and the number of suicides in females aged 15-24 increased by 87% in the last 20 years.

Since I last spoke with M almost four months ago, I’ve interviewed 37 more current and former high school students, most of whom attend Oyster River High School (ORHS) and identify as female. When I began this story, I knew I was taking a risk interviewing students about some of the most painful moments in their lives. But, when my peers started coming up to me in the hallway asking if they could speak to me about their mental health experiences, I knew these were stories I had to tell.

Despite extensive reporting, I acknowledge that this is not the full story, and that this issue is a multifaceted one. However, I also acknowledge that getting the full story would mean interviewing hundreds more students and prying open wounds before they’ve had time to heal, an act that can be both painful and detrimental. My goal was simply to amplify the voices of students ready to share their experiences and use these stories to dig deeper into a crisis I had only skimmed the surface of.

I

About a week after my conversation with M, I began the process of interviewing students who believed they had stories to tell. Looking back, I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

When I first spoke with G ('24) under the nauseating glow of the high school library's fluorescent lights, it oddly mirrored my first meeting with M. Unlike M, though, G was dressed in bright blue skinny jeans, her pin-straight hair was neatly pulled back, and she hugged a thick textbook tightly to her chest. In my gray sweatpants and stained hoodie, I invited her to take a seat, even though it looked like she probably should've been the one interviewing me.

About two minutes into our conversation, it became clear that G's primary stressor in life is school, which she illustrated by describing the nausea she experiences before tests and explaining how crying over school has become "a weekly thing."

"I've always wanted to do well in school, and I've always had high expectations for myself," G told me, fidgeting with the corners of her textbook. "It felt like things were fine in middle school, but then you get to high school, and you have a GPA and a workload, and even higher expectations. I get that GPA is just a number, but I see that number as a measure of my academic abilities and whether I'm smart. When I get less than an A or an A+, it's almost like I'm being downgraded."

When G said this, I remember setting aside the pencil I was taking notes with and pausing, trying to think tactfully about what to ask next. As a student at Oyster River, I've witnessed exactly what she is talking about: the obsession with grades—and other people's grades—up to the exact percentage, the immense distinction between a plus and a minus sign, the highly regarded GPA that seems to be so deeply imbedded within students' identities it could practically be worn as a name tag.

So, while I wasn't necessarily shocked that, after three months of reporting, nearly half of the students I spoke with said academics was the number one driver of their poor mental health (with the rest claiming academic pressures amplified other stress-

ors in their lives), I questioned whether attending an affluent school district, like Oyster River, influences the seeming equivalence placed on academic perfection and self-worth.

According to the Washington Post, a report on advancing health equity recently added kids from "high-achieving schools" to their list of "at-risk" groups, who are experiencing high rates of mental health struggles compared to national rates. While high school is stressful for teens independent of the school they attend, studies show that competitive environments at schools like Oyster River can have disproportionate psychological costs.

"I have a lot of high-performing people around me, so although I tell myself, 'You don't need to be like them,' I want to be getting those grades, too. I want to be towards the top of the class, too, so I can be successful," G explained to me. As she was saying this, I was immediately brought back to a

What happens when we mask our internal struggles, such as the very real feeling of being inadequate when placed next to peers, and assign them the all-encompassing label "school," which feels external, compulsory, and beyond our control?

moment I had with M earlier that week, in which she called Oyster River's competitive environment "toxic" for her mental health.

M had explained that "Here, there is the desire to sort of be the best. Like, before one of my midterms, I was crying and couldn't breathe, but I still took it. I cared more about the test than myself."

Increased competitiveness doesn't seem like a big enough factor to account for the rising number of teens struggling with their mental health, though. Arguably, kids have always been comparing their academic abilities to their peers. Is it possible that, with new technology, these comparisons are just happening more frequently? Unlike previous generations, high schoolers constantly have access to and are notified of their fluctuating grades through apps like Pow-

erSchool, which one student described as a reminder of "failure in [their] back pocket."

That's why, when I brought up what M mentioned about Oyster River's competitive environment, G said she would probably feel pressure to be the best no matter where she went to high school, and that the biggest reason school stresses her out is the non-existent divide between her academic and social life.

G, who checks PowerSchool frequently, says she attaches so much of her identity to grades she "doesn't know who she is anymore" when she receives a bad one, and that her excessive PowerSchool checks cause her to "obsess over 1% differences."

Suddenly, the morning bell signifying the start of first period interrupted our conversation, and G and I were forced to head our separate ways. I remember walking down the hall that day and thinking about how similar our interview was to my conversation with M but, in that moment, I couldn't quite place my finger on it.

It wasn't until I relistened to the interviews and looked back at my interview notes that I realized the similarity extends beyond content and seeps into language. When students told me that their mental health was poor because they were obsessed over their grades, or sacrificed sleep to complete work, or felt they were in strict academic competition with their peers, these were never the first responses, but rather the third or fourth. In fact, the first response was typically always the one-word scapegoat "school" or "academics," with the "why" having to be prodded out with questions.

Part of me wonders how this simple language swap affects the way teens view their agency over their own struggles as students. What happens when we mask our internal struggles, such as the very real feeling of being inadequate when placed next to peers, and assign them the all-encompassing label "school," which feels external, compulsory, and beyond our control?

II

In search of a quiet space to talk, I roamed the school's halls with D ('23) until we stumbled upon the dead end of a hallway. "That's perfect," she said, motioning for me to come and sit down on the cold

tiles beside her.

The first thing I noticed about D was her calm disposition, a slight change from the more energetic, anxious bunch I'd spent much of the previous month interviewing. She sat like a little kid, with her arms pulling her knees tightly to her chest, her chin resting on her right kneecap, and her eyes staring up at mine.

D started by telling me how it all began in middle school when she would observe her sister constantly being stressed out about schoolwork, getting A's in return, and being stuck in this miserable cycle of putting in her all to achieve perfection. So, when D entered high school, she adopted her sister's way of doing things. Around this time, she was diagnosed with severe depression and anxiety, but instead of trying to navigate that, she tried repressing it, pushing herself so hard academically she didn't have time to take care of herself.

D told me in March of her sophomore year, she hit rock bottom, and that she seriously contemplated taking her own life.

"I felt I had to be at the same level as my sister, but also earn my mom's approval through my grades. My mom told me, 'You have all this time to study and work on your grades,' and I told her, like, 'Mom, I want to go out, and have fun, and live a normal life,'" D told me.

For her, this internal desire to fill her sister's shoes, paired with the external pressures from her parents, led her to seek alternative ways to regain control over her body through self-harm and an eating disorder.

The way D described trying to gain control over herself by disrespecting her body reminded me of something sophomore S ('25), a student I had interviewed just days before, said to me.

"In a time when you feel like everything in your life or about you is wrong, that's when you feel like your eating disorder is your friend and is there for you. But the deeper into it you are, the more you start to see that this thing that you used to control other parts of your life is now controlling you, too," S said.

S told me her eating disorder started as a way for her to control her image. She recalls what it was like growing up as a "chunkier child" in the toxicity of 2000s diet culture, feeling like the "only way you could have friends, have a boyfriend, or be good at sports was to be skinny."

S also told me she became even more self-conscious of her body as she grew older. She clung to the "unachievable and unnatural standards" of what she thought she should look like and made it her goal to be skinny like the Instagram models on her feed.

I asked D if, like S, social media played a role in fueling her eating disorder. She nodded but said her relationship with social media was more complicated than that. She acknowledged that some of the people she followed promoted unrealistic beauty standards

but also explained that "having someone say, 'I understand what you're going through' when I wasn't hearing it from the people in my real life was super validating."

Going into this story, I knew social media—the real big distinction between my generation and the ones before it—would possibly play a huge role in my understanding of why teens were increasingly struggling with their mental health, I just didn't know how. To further investigate the relationship D was describing, I sought the expertise of experienced teachers, school counselors, and adolescent psychologists. I started with ORHS English teacher Marjke Yatsevitch.

Yatsevitch, known to many students by her last initial, has been teaching at Oyster River for over 16 years and takes an individualized approach to the mental health of her students, advertising herself as a trusted adult kids can talk to when they're struggling. As one of her advisees told me when I entered her classroom for an interview, "if anyone knows what's up, it's Y."

When I questioned Yatsevitch about the impact the rising popularity of social media platforms, like Instagram and TikTok, has had on her students, she thought about the question for a while before responding. "That's one major cultural shift: I did not grow up in this sort of amplified, self-evaluative era that social media has created for this generation. Eating disorders are not new, drug abuse is not new, F.O.M.O is not new, but the amplification of it through social media is," she told me. "There seems to be this culture of critics where judgment of others has no social consequences, and the judgment of yourself is constant."

The day following my conversation with Yatsevitch, I was sitting with my friend B ('23) in math. Unable to get what Yatsevitch said out of my head, I mentioned the idea of teens being stuck in a 'cycle of themselves' to her. To my surprise, B began delving into her own experiences in the middle of running a statistical inference test, and I asked her if we could pause the conversation and talk about it during lunch.

When we arrived in the Senior Core, B sat atop the lockers, legs crossed, and told me about her struggles with clinical depression, which she began struggling with at age 13. She says social media only made things worse for her, and "made her life a living hell," when she would spend hours in isolation comparing her body and life to people online. Now, B says she uses platforms like TikTok to alleviate her loneliness when she feels she's "the only person that exists."

"On TikTok, a lot of people are saying the same things which make me feel less alone. But, if you think about it, those aren't real people you're interacting with face to face. It's a screen. It's scary how easy it is to forget that sometimes," B told me.



What B said didn't seem uncommon, though. Among the teens I interviewed, all of them used at least one social media platform, and all but six said they frequently use it in an unhealthy way, including increased time spent scrolling in isolation.

Curious as to how this increased social isolation has amplified teenage mental health struggles, I called Psychologist Micheline Hagan later that week, who has spent years working with young adults on college campuses, searching for answers. Hagan explained that kids today are more inclined to use social media as an outlet when they're emotionally overwhelmed, instead of interacting socially.

"Some of the biggest factors for improving mental health are engagement, belonging, and connection. You can get some of that online, but when you're with people in real life, you're a lot less focused on how you *present* and more focused on just *being*. With social media, you're always surrounded by yourself," Hagan explained to me,

Although A mentioned she sometimes seeks out restrictive eating content, it seeks her out, too. According to a 2022 report by the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), a nonprofit organization, TikTok's "For You" algorithm is designed to immediately tailor to users' interests. This means a user who watches one video regarding mental illness while scrolling will receive other content related to other mental illnesses.

Several of my sources reported receiving TikToks on their "For You" page regarding anxiety, depression, "thinspo," self-harm, and even suicide. They said TikToks with text like, "5 signs you have manic depression" and "Things only girls with anxiety do" hooked them in, and proceeded to list vague symptoms that most people relate to.

In my conversation with Hagan, I brought up what A had described to me, and she said she actually sees a lot of young adults who have self-diagnosed themselves based on the oftentimes inaccurate infor-

of my sources' poor mental health was the byproduct of their own doing.

III

In my conversation with Hagan, however, she also noted there is one noticeable benefit to mental illness trending on social media: "Kids clearly feel more open about identifying that they're struggling than they did in my generation," Hagan said. "And that's important, because talking about our struggles is the only way we can ever get past them."

Like Hagan, Yatsevitch mentioned how the destigmatization of mental illness likely accounts for some of these rising numbers. "I think the fact that we're talking about this right now is a reason we're seeing more

teens be open and vulnerable about their

"As humans, and especially teens trying to figure out who they are, we look for those immediate answers and buzzwords to explain why we feel or experience the things we do, and TikToks like these give that explanation to people."

echoing Yatsevitch's argument that teens are growing up in an extremely self-evaluative era, in which it's hard to get a break from themselves.

One night, I reached for my phone to dial A's ('24) number. Several people I interviewed had told me A uses various social media platforms regularly and that she would be worth reaching out to. After calling twice already that day and receiving no response, I waited for the beep to leave a message, but was pleasantly surprised when I heard a soft "hello?" echo through my phone's speaker.

As I spoke with A for what ended up being a two-hour call, our conversation began with her describing how social media has made her hyper-aware of her flaws. I remember her telling me about her experience on apps like Instagram and TikTok, claiming sometimes the content she sees makes her "hate her body so much" she would "do anything to change that. Even though I know it's not healthy, I just restrict anyway, because I guess social media's telling me I want to look skinny more than I want to eat," she said.

mation they've received on social media.

"If you have noticed that you feel anxious sometimes, and then you see a video about an anxiety disorder, you're going to convince yourself that you have that. As humans, and especially teens trying to figure out who they are, we look for those immediate answers and buzzwords to explain why we feel or experience the things we do, and TikToks like these give that explanation to people," Hagan told me.

Hagan further explained it can be "extremely harmful" when teenagers online treat mental illness as a quirky trend, because these posts frequently glamorize mental illness and "spread misinformation like wildfire" to teens who might misinterpret the severity of certain mental illnesses.

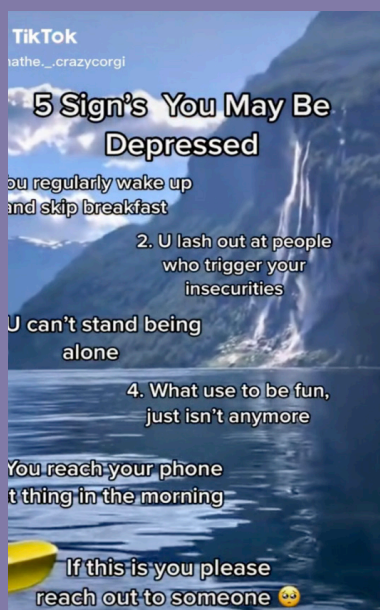
After all of this reporting, though, I found myself back at the same question I faced when students had talked to me about academic pressure. If the kids I'm interviewing are aware that social media drives their eating disorders, social isolation, and the overall amplification of their poor mental health, then why do they continue using it? I was still stumped by the idea that a lot

mental health." She said more people today feel like they have "permission to speak openly about naming the thing that's happening to us and are not being wrapped up in a culture of shame surrounding mental health issues."

Still, Yatsevitch says that "we're in a weird in-between point"—mental health is destigmatized enough for people to identify their struggles and realize they need help, but there's still a stigma around receiving that help and speaking with people.

When students informed me they were struggling, I would always ask where they went for support. Almost one third responded that they didn't turn to people, but things—social media, substances, and self-harm—to help them cope with overwhelming emotions. Many said they didn't share their struggles with others because they feared people would treat them differently.

The day I interviewed Yatsevitch, I also spoke with Lucas Savage ('24), who told me he thinks efforts to destigmatize mental health conversations are even more crucial after COVID-19, in which many teens grew



accustomed to internalizing their struggles.

"You just get stuck with this idea that no one else can help you or understand what you're going through, and that the way you're dealing with it is the best or only way to deal with it. So, you retreat into your little bubble and just allow things to keep getting worse until it gets to be so bad that you can't convince yourself you're okay anymore," said Savage.

As Savage said this, I thought back to my conversation with A, who revealed during our phone call that she was diagnosed with generalized anxiety and clinical depression this year.

Unlike most of the kids I spoke with, A said she's genuinely never cared about school or her grades. "I fail at school, but that's just not what I care about right now. For me, my illnesses are mostly genetic, and I also don't have the best home life, which makes it worse," she told me.

Instead of opening up to people, A says she avoids the things that make her anxious. She cuts class and sneaks into the girls' bathroom, vaping to make the time go by faster. She isolates herself for fear of being disliked. She runs from her anxieties before they can catch her.

But, sometimes, the anxiety outruns her. It pins her down and forces her to stare in the face of her own shortcomings, a feeling, A says, is so painful it requires "another pain" to cancel out what's going on inside [her] head.

"That's when I turn to cutting," she told me, explaining how she uses self-harm to convert her mental pain into physical pain.

"When I feel that pain that's going on physically, I just cry about that. And then, after the pain is over, I can just stop crying and move on with my day. Sometimes I feel like, when I don't do that, the mental hurting will just keep going further if I don't numb it with something," A told me.

Three months ago, A said her friend walked in on her attempting to commit suicide after she and her mother, who had been drinking, got into an argument. She told me it wasn't until that breaking point that she decided to get professional help.

I can still think back to what I was thinking the moment A spoke these words. I was sitting on the front steps of my house, struggling to understand how someone so young, someone *my age*, could be going through *all* this. When the call ended, I walked into my kitchen where my mom was cooking dinner and, for the first time since my interview with M, began to cry. I cried over the things A had told me, but I mostly cried because I was becoming aware of the possible repercussions of my gamble. I began to wonder if it was my place to be writing about these stories, or if telling these stories would actually help anyone.

Later that night, after I had collected myself, my mom told me that Lorie Keenan had called her to say she heard about my story and said she would be willing to speak with me.

For as long as I can remember, we have lived two houses down from the Keenans and spent so much time with them that they are practically my second family. But, for as long as I've known their oldest daughter,

Karly, she's always remained sort of an enigma to me. We would hear tales around the neighborhood that Karly got suspended from school because she pierced her nose in the bathroom in seventh grade or got expelled because she beat-up her ex-girlfriend in school, but the Karly I knew was shy and sweet.

A few days later, I met with Karly and Lorie for dinner. When I arrived at their house, I was greeted by the smell of chicken, the sound of Jerry Garcia, and the family pug, Geezer, who quickly lost interest in me when he realized I didn't come bearing food.

Lorie, who was dancing in the kitchen, told me to take a seat next to Karly, who was dressed in black leggings and a dark blue T-shirt. "I'm a little nervous to tell you all this, Abbles, but I trust you," Lorie said to me with a little smile, staring at my phone which had begun to record our conversation.

Karly, now 22, told me she was in middle school when her mother first discovered something was wrong. She remembers the night Karly sat at the foot of the bed, her eyes red and swollen, and rolled up her sleeves to reveal an array of self-hate: permanently etched onto her skin in the form of baby pink exes and lines. The scars, left by the blade of a disposable razor Karly found in the trash, began at her palms and extended past her shoulders, to her collarbones. She was 11.

"I don't think I knew what or why I was feeling the hate and the pain that I felt at that age, but I knew that cutting made it feel

better, so I did that because I didn't want to tell someone and have them think something was wrong with me," Karly told me.

That night, Lorie remembers cradling her crying child in her arms as the emergency room's automatic doors slid open. She said Karly's injuries were so severe that the medical assistant could barely look her in the eye and recalls the doctor writing his personal email on a wooden tongue depressor. "When he gave me that, it was like both of us acknowledging that resources for Karly were going to be scarce, and that it was going to be a long journey to the end."

It was 2012. Lorie said there was barely any awareness around mental health, and that no one seemed to know how to manage what somebody as young as Karly was going through. She told me the waiting lists for therapy were long, and that when they finally scheduled appointments with therapists, they often told her 'Don't worry, it's just hormones.'

"I was coming to terms with the fact that my child has a mental illness. That was a hard thing as a parent because you can't fix

person to tell them Karly likely had bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, both of which make it difficult for her to regulate her emotions.

With conversations surrounding mental health becoming increasingly destigmatized, Karly said she's hopeful "kids will feel like talking about their mental health isn't something that has to be shameful." She hopes kids will begin to seek help from trusted adults and professionals, rather than rely on destructive coping mechanisms, like she did.

"For a really long time, I didn't want help, and I didn't want to take my meds because I didn't want to believe that I was bipolar," Karly told me. "But it gets better, and it only gets better when the resources are there, you have access to those resources, and you continue to use those resources because you can tell the people who are helping you genuinely care about your progress."

In this moment, I tried to figure out what felt different about my conversation with Karly from the high schoolers I had been interviewing. And then I realized it was that Karly, after years of fighting for

Chasing it for her mom, who brought her to every appointment, laid in bed with her at night, and never gave up. But, most importantly, Karly was chasing it for herself. She could see the person she wanted to become and understood that, at the end of the day, she was the only one who could truly pull her out of this darkness.

When I returned home after our conversation that night, I couldn't fall asleep. I knew when I had left Lorie and Karly's house it would be my last interview, so my mind was racing, thinking about how I would make sense of all the stories I had gathered over these past four months. Mostly, I was kept awake by the frustration that came with my inability to help those who entrusted me with their experiences. Entering into this story, I knew I wouldn't emerge on the other side with all the answers, but I had at least hoped I would gain some sort of clarity as to why this was all happening. Now, I realize I mostly just revealed the powerlessness a lot of us feel. My sources felt powerless over their emotions and well-being. I felt powerless because I could not apply simple solutions to the complexities of this crisis.

If there's anything I learned from Karly's experience, though, it is that this feeling of powerlessness can break you. It can prevent you from seeking out the support you need and can convince you that no matter how much work you put in, no matter how much you fight for yourself, none of it will ever be enough. That's where other people come in. They can help you realize that you are in control.

That's what Lorie did for Karly. She told her daughter that she could be more than her mental illness. But, as Karly said to her mom that night in the kitchen, "You could only do so much for me." When it came down to it, Lorie could say these words over and over, but only Karly could believe them.

When I reached over to stop the recording, I remember looking over at Lorie, who was wiping tears from her eyes. Suddenly, she walked over to Karly and wrapped her arms around her, kissing her cheek. "You don't know how proud I am of you, Karl."

M

- Abby Owens



it, and nobody seemed to know how to help us. It felt like I was watching my kid walking on a tight rope 100 feet above me, and I'm just standing beneath her just thinking if she's going to fall, I'm going to catch her. And I know if she does, it's going to kill us both, but that's how it had to be," Lorie told me.

Both Lorie and Karly knew it was more than a phase, and after years of searching for a good therapist, they finally found one. Lorie says that the therapist was the first

them, had gotten the resources she needed to guide her out of the darkness many of my sources were still fumbling through. After years of trying new meds, refusing to take them, getting healthy, and reverting back to her old self-destructive ways, Karly, at 22, had confronted her mental illness and refused to keep bending to its will. She could see a sliver of light creeping through the darkness, and now she was chasing it. Chasing it for her little sisters, who needed the big-sister role model they never had.

A close-up photograph of a student's hands holding a white protest sign. The sign features the hashtag "#DUIH" written in large, bold, yellow marker. Below the hashtag is a drawing of a knife with a red blade and a brown handle. The background is a blurred brick wall. Other students are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera.

ORHS Students Stand Against Gun Violence

Thirteen days after the latest school shooting in Nashville—and eight days before a man was arrested for sitting in front of Portsmouth High School with guns and body armor—ORHS students walked out of their classrooms. On April 5th, high school students across the country conducted 300 demonstrations in 41 states, according to Students Demand Action. ORHS students participated, walking out of classrooms at 12 pm to meet in the school's courtyard.





Paige Burt ('23) speaks to the students gathered, megaphone in her right hand, phone in the other. After hearing about the walkout and having alarming conversations with her peers, she knew she had to speak. "Education is my big thing; the more we can understand about how these things work the better off we'll be [to] take action ourselves," she said.

Delaney Nadeau ('24) (above right) and Grace Kasper ('25) (above left) helped ORHS join in on the national walkouts. The idea was born in the Writing Center on April 4, a day before the walkout. After seeing TikToks about walkouts in high schools, Kasper was inspired. "[We] repost these things [saying] 'gun violence is bad,' but the thing is that we don't actually do anything about it," said Kasper. "The teens of America decided that we were going to actually stand up and actually do something about it." Nadeau and Kasper spent the next 23 hours frantically planning and advertising the event on social media and through word of mouth.



Elise Bacon ('26) stood in front of the crowd, speaking from her heart. She did not know there was going to be a walkout until the morning of April 5th. When she found out about the walkout, she spent the next few hours until 12pm spreading the word. "I have four younger siblings... I hate sending them to school every day, I hate saying good-bye to them... hate that they're growing up like this," Bacon said as the students filed back inside, her voice shaky and filled with emotion. She is working towards creating a chapter of Students Demand Action group here at the school, a student led organization to end gun violence.





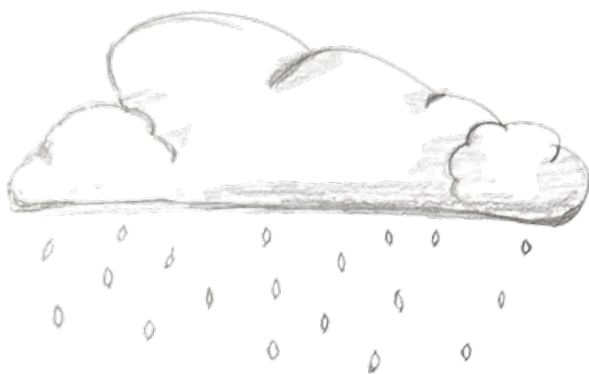
The windows were filled with faces as classes ground to a halt. Karen VanDyke, a social studies teacher (seen in the bottom middle window) watched as people left her classroom and filled the courtyard, reading the signs students held above their heads and listening to the speeches. VanDyke noted that even though this is such a big systemic issue, the “only guarantee of not making a difference is not doing anything; if you don’t try, nothing is going to change.”



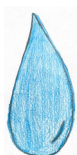
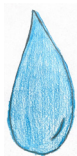
William Carrico ('23) holds up a sign reading “protect kids not guns” while sitting on the shoulders of Ousman Sanyang ('23). Student responses to the walkout were mixed. Some embraced it, while others were skeptical it would actually create change. Elliot Orchard-Blowen ('24) said, “it’s just a number... [it] didn’t really start a conversation... it just adds to the number of here are the number of nationwide schools who participated.” Alja Forcey-Rodreguiz ('24), who decided to walkout, countered Orchard-Blowen’s comment saying, “even if it’s not going to change anything, it’s still doing something for what you believe in.”

- Hazel Stasko

SEASONAL



DEPRESSION



The sunlight is still creeping through the trees, so it is hard to believe that it is already seven o'clock at night. A big contrast to the five o'clock winter sunset, that would steal away the sun before you got a chance to step outside. Feeling suddenly better from the warm weather and long-lasting sunlight is no coincidence.

Due to the dreary weather of New England, and short winter days, the cold months of the school year can cause many people to fall into a state of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), more commonly known as seasonal depression. This can cause students to struggle in school, with both their grades and social lives.

SAD is a type of depression that follows the pattern of seasons. For example, a person who suffers from SAD could either see a decrease in mental well-being in the fall and winter months, while feeling better in the spring and summer months, or vice versa. This pattern will occur at the same time every year.

The symptoms that come along with SAD are usually similar to those that come from general depression. This can include, but is not limited to, feeling sad or down daily, losing interest in activities, sleeping too much (or too little), and difficulty concentrating, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Although researchers have not come up with a conclusive cause for SAD, there are some points that could lead to it. Researchers found that this disorder is more common among women, those who already struggle with mental health, and those who live further north according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Kim Cassamas, a counselor at Oyster River High School (ORHS), sees a decrease in mental health during the winter months which can be interpreted as students struggling from SAD. She says this is pretty consistent every year. "We definitely have an increase of students that struggle just staying motivated and engaged during the end of winter

each year," she explained. Cassamas says that this is the time that she would call the peak of students struggling.

Sam*, a student, talked about their struggle with SAD at school, saying, "I feel more fatigued and overwhelmed in the winter." Sam is a high performer in school and typically a very social person. "It kind of feels like every day is the same and it's feeling a lot less exciting than when it's nicer out."

Being a social person, their mood is usually affected by those around them. So, when many people are also suffering from SAD, they tend to feel even more down, "I feel like I'm personally very malleable to other people's moods," they said.

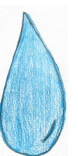
Another student, Jessie*, talked about their struggle with socialization during the winter months, "I usually feel down and tired all the time. The thought of hanging out with people is so draining." They feel that even in school they talk less in

general. The lack of Vitamin D, combined with the dreary New England weather, they think, is a recipe for depressing feelings.

Scientific proof backs up what Jessie is saying. A person's brain who struggles with SAD has a change in serotonin and melatonin levels can cause SAD. The brain has reduced activity of serotonin which, research suggests, controls the levels of molecules that help maintain normal serotonin levels. The brain could also see an over-production of melatonin. When both levels are off, it affects the body's daily rhythm which can make it harder on the body to adjust to seasonal changes (such as day length) according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

As a counselor, Cassamas sees a lot more students than she normally does for mental health reasons, including students that normally do not struggle in this area, and mentions it is a time when a lot of students will hit walls (when a student feels like they can no longer progress).

Hitting walls can greatly affect a student's ability to perform in school. "Your overall being is not



"Your capacity changes, especially when you're internally struggling and that is not visibly seen. You have to mask it, and it takes a lot of energy to mask."

good. It's really hard to perform at your capacity," Cassamas says. Getting through the school day is so draining, by the time a student gets home there is not energy left to complete homework, and Cassamas thinks this is especially draining when students are focused on masking their struggling. "It might not be very visible here in the building for all students, but they're feeling it at home when they see a change in their own patterns."

Trouble concentrating, low energy, and having an overall lower interest are all things that make performing at a high level in school incredibly challenging. Cassamas mentioned this when talking about a student's ability to complete work, saying, "your capacity changes, especially when you're internally struggling and that is not visibly seen. You have to mask it, and it takes a lot of energy to mask."

Sam talked about how they feel in school in the winter, saying, "I feel like I get more overwhelmed during this time in school, especially the long stretch after winter break until February break." They typically use fun distractions to help with stressful feelings surrounding school, but in the winter, it is harder. "It feels like there's not much to distract me from feeling overwhelmed so it makes it feel worse than it actually might be."

Jessie also has higher levels of stress during this time. They talked about how their grades always suffer at the end of second quarter and all of third quarter. "It is consistently when my grades are the lowest... it's not that my test scores are lower but more that I have no motivation to get homework done and often get zeros in class for that."

However, it is important to keep in mind the other factors that go into skewing this data. As science teachers always say, "you can't change more than one variable in an experiment." This is essentially the same concept. During the winter months, students undergo the pressure of midterm exams, which can lead to emotions and symptoms similar to those of depression. Cassamas brought up that for upperclassmen who take a large number of semester long classes the

switch in schedules can cause for a change in grades.

"I think midterm exams, for me at least, really drain me. I spend a lot of time studying, and when it's over I usually have less energy to put towards school," said Jessie. This, on top of the symptoms of SAD, makes for a difficult few months in school.

Some pieces of advice given by these students include taking a drive down the coast "even if it's too cold to spend a lot of time [at the beach] just sitting in the car and looking at the water helps to make me feel better." They say doing activities to clear their head usually helps with the overwhelming feelings. "It helps remind me that feelings of being overwhelmed are temporary and soon enough it'll be summer again with way less stress."

Cassamas also gives advice on how to feel better. Some small things such as taking a vitamin D supplement can help improve your mood. She is a huge supporter of self-reflection anytime you are going through struggles and thinks that this is a crucial step to feeling better. "Reach out and connect with your resources, your trusted adults, your support team."

If you start to notice a pattern of depressive feelings around the same time every year Cassamas says you should start taking preventative measures beforehand. "Try to beat it and put a goal in place." To do this, Cas-

samas suggests to "connect with your doctor to find out what the best path would be for a preventative measure for yourself heading into the following winter season."

The most important thing to remember for those who struggle with SAD is that you're not alone and even though you may not see it, many people are also struggling during this time. Taking measures to ensure your mental health is well should be at the top of your priority list. Remember that there are many resources available to students in the counseling department. **M**

- Abby Deane

** Names changed for anonymity*



The Resolution of Rank

For many years, class ranks have helped numerically compare students in their respective grades, showing their academic performance. However, this is no longer possible. As of October 2022, class ranks have been completely removed from PowerSchool. Although this change is quite sudden, many people might not know that this decision was influenced by an event 10 years ago, when the idea of removal started.

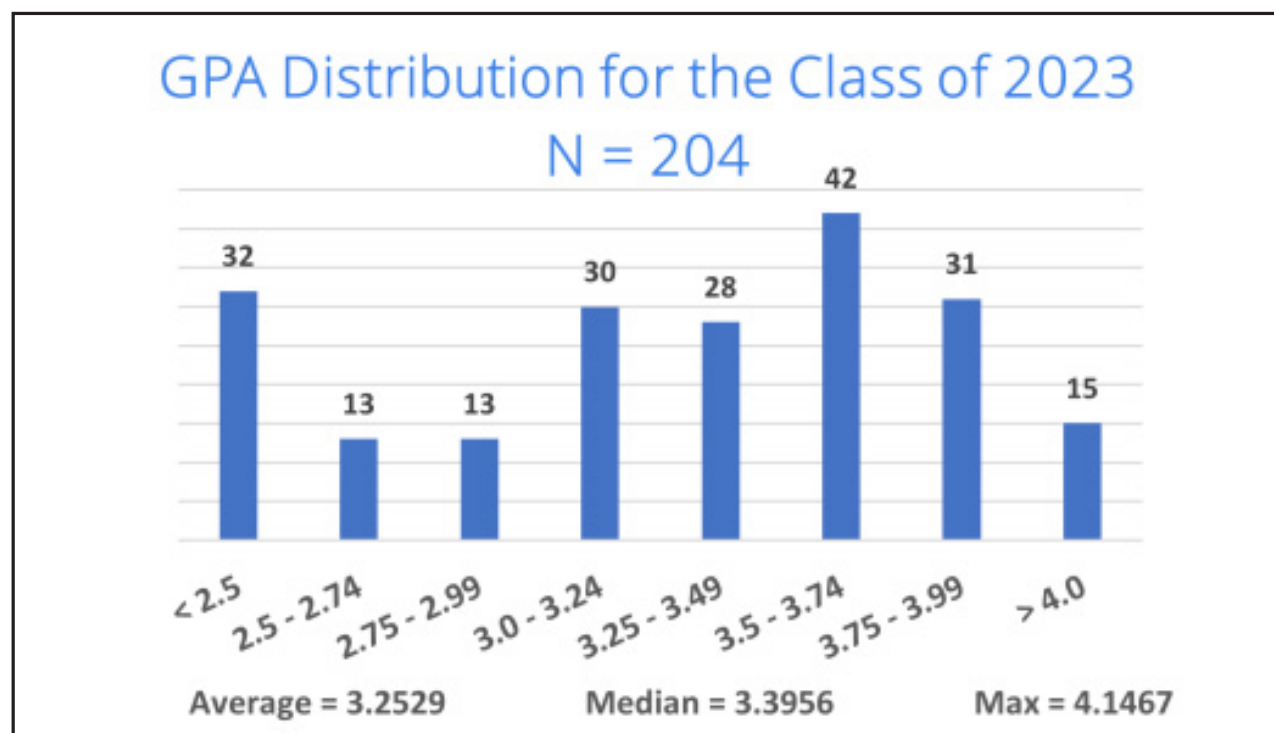
Class ranks are a system that takes a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) and compares it with every other student in that grade, giving students a rank of where they are in their grade compared to their peers. These ranks also give colleges an idea about how students compare with their peers, create some scholarship opportunities, and determine the top 10 students in the senior class, including valedictorian and salutatorian.

During the 2013 school year, Oyster River High School (ORHS) administrators made a decision to remove class ranks from the high school transcripts, meaning colleges would not be able to see students' individual ranks in the

school. "One of the things that was raised by both students and parents is that we have a pretty academically focused student body. That has remained consistent since then. So, when you look at class rank and our school, students who are in what they call the 50th percentile or below often were being harmed because of that ranking," says ORHS school counselor Heather Machanoff. Since the average GPA at ORHS is around a 3.3, having a 3.2 GPA puts students under the top 50% who would have been in the top 50% in other schools.

However, the 2013 decision to remove ranks from transcripts was faced with some opposition in the community. "There's a small group of kids that it might hurt not to have it. What if you are valedictorian? Or what if you're in the top 10? For those that are in [the top 10], if we don't report it, they would not be allowed to promote it," says Jason Baker, another ORHS counselor.

To solve this issue, counselors came up with a solution. "A compromise was PowerSchool will still tell us what it is. Anyone who wants to know what it is, unofficially be



A tool available to approximate a student's rank. Shown on ORHS School Profile (Source: ORCSD).

cause it's never going to go on the transcript, can know," Baker explains. For the past 10 years, this has been the system ORHS has used.

Over the years, many students would want to know their ranks, as they believed it had more importance than it actually had. This led to students comparing ranks with each other. During the 2022-23 school year, there were several instances where students teased others about their class rank, and some of these "crossed the line," according to Baker.

When the counselors discussed class rank with some new administrators like Principal Rebecca Noe and Counseling Director Shannon Caron, they realized that the change 10 years ago didn't really change the rank system at all. "Just a fresh perspective from somebody who's like, okay, it wasn't here a decade ago, I'm hearing you say you dropped it, but it's still available, so you didn't drop it," continues Baker. This ultimately led to the removal of rank being able to be viewed in PowerSchool.

However, not everyone agrees with this decision. Katherine McEwan ('23), this year's salutatorian, believes that the full removal of class ranks wasn't really necessary, as the students who do care about these statistics will work harder to achieve a higher rank. "[Class rank] is a fine system, because if you care enough about it, you can know [about your rank]. And if that's motivating you to work harder at your grades, I think that should be allowed. It's not like they're publishing lists of names of everybody who's in order so you can make fun of whoever has the lowest GPA," she says.

"What it was manifesting itself was competition, comparison, and then you get students who maybe take a different strength of schedule or maybe even a less rigorous schedule for the GPA"

Another big issue with the ranking system, however, was it also encouraged students to take less academically challenging courses to get a higher rank. "What was manifesting itself was competition, comparison, and then you get students who maybe take a different strength of schedule or maybe even a less rigorous schedule for the GPA," Baker explained.

To fix this, McEwan believes the answer is to weigh GPA. Usually, an A is denoted with a numerical value of 4.0 in PowerSchool. Weighing GPA gives harder classes – like APs or Honors – an increase in this value, meaning an A in a weighted class could be worth as much as a 5.0, depending on how much the school wants it to be increased. Since ORHS doesn't weigh AP classes, an A in AP Chemistry affects GPA the same as an A in Chemistry, which many students would say is an easier class. "The people who are taking really easy art classes and music classes are going through the motions of getting B's and A's. Their GPA is going to look the same as somebody who's doing AP classes and is working really hard in those classes," she says.

"The people who are taking really easy art classes and music classes are going through the motions of getting B's and A's. Their GPA is going to look the same as somebody who's doing AP classes and is working really hard in those classes"

A lot of the misconception surrounding ranks is that it helps get students into college, but that's not always the case. Colleges prefer to see the classes students take instead of just their rank. "A lot of schools dissect your transcript anyway, so they might only be looking for 16 core academics and they take those and create a broad GPA. Since we've dropped rank, our student acceptances to good competitive colleges have not changed," says Machanoff.

Additionally, there are many traditions that are based off ranking, like valedictorian, salutatorian, and top 10 students of the graduating class. Just because ranks don't exist, however, doesn't mean these traditions go away. "Can we still find it out? Of course. We do still do top 10. The valedictorian will know who they are, the salutatorian will know who they are because they will be invited to give a speech [at graduation]," says Baker. To do this, rankings will be briefly reactivated in PowerSchool which allows counselors and administrators to find it out.

As of right now, the administration does not intend to change class rank. **M**

- James Li

Oyster River Massacre

Within the last few years, historical monuments, markers, and statues have been removed nationwide for promoting one-sided stories of American history. So, in May 2021, members of the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (NHDHR) traversed the state to identify outdated historical highway markers. Among New Hampshire's 277 markers, only nine were removed as "highly problematic," including one about the so-called 1694 Oyster River Massacre: an attack, perpetrated by Indigenous men, that left over 100 English colonists dead or enslaved as part of the larger conflict between Native Americans and English colonists.

Now, nearly two years after the sign's removal, the committee to draft new text—which includes The Durham Historic Association (DHA), The New Hampshire Commission on Native American Affairs (NHCNAA), and four other local group—is at a standstill. While most members argue the attack was retribution for the colonists' mistreatment of Indigenous people and land, and that this context should be provided on the marker, the DHA's constituents

claim this retelling of history is accurate and inaccurate. Though the state's Division of Historic Resources has the final say on the marker's language, the NHDHR wants committee members to reach a consensus on how Durham's residents are remembering its history.

"A lot of the history we're taught is written from a very singular perspective, but now we're trying to present the history from various perspectives to tell various stories about a single event. The Oyster River Massacre Marker was one we identified needed more to the story," said NHDHR staff member Amy Dixon, who took over the project last summer.

Dixon, whose job is to find a compromise among the groups' historical interpretations, says it's been tricky because strong arguments are coming from both sides.

Two of the biggest advocates for replacing the sign to provide more historical context are head speakers of the Cowasuck Band of the Pennacook-Abenaki People Denise and Paul Pouliot. Denise Pouliot is also a member of the Commission on Native American Affairs.

Pouliot said it's important this history is being remembered, but that the old sign, manufactured in 1960, painted Indigenous People as "savages," and deprived the event of its complexities.

"It's so one-sided," she said. "None of the treaties that the English made with the Native Americans were upheld. So, the current wording of the sign shows that we broke a treaty once, too, meanwhile, that's all the colonists did to Native Americans the moment they got here."

The Pouliots, based in Alton, NH, spend lots of time traveling across New Hampshire to "de-colonialize local history," and have updated the language of many historical markers and monuments in the Seacoast area, like Dover and Portsmouth. However, Denise Pouliot says it has been particularly hard to install a new sign in Durham because the DHA, a community-based group responsible for preserving Durham's 300-year-old history, has resisted changing the marker's text.

"The state has already approved our wording, the NHDHR has already approved the wording, as a tribe we've already promot

Here is the NHCNAA's proposed language for the new sign:

Raid on Oyster River

On July 18th, 1694, the English settlement of Oyster River was attacked by a large party of Indigenous men with their French allies. One third of the residents were captured or died; livestock, crops, and half the buildings were destroyed. The raid was retribution for the kidnapping and enslavement of 350 natives, frustration over the 1693 Treaty of Pemaquid, the loss of unceded tribal lands, and ongoing harm to Indigenous lifeways. This is considered one of the most devastating confrontations during King William's War.

Here is the DHA's proposed language for the new sign:

The Oyster River Massacre

On July 18, 1694 (O.S.) during King William's War between England and France, Indigenous groups from Acadia allied with the French broke the 1693 Treaty of Pemaquid by attacking on both shores of the Oyster River. Nearly 20% of the residents, over 100, were killed or captured to be enslaved or sold to the French. Houses, crops, and livestock were destroyed. "Oyster River...is layd waste," read the dispatch from acting NH Governor Usher to authorities in Boston. Hostilities continued until England and France signed the Peace Treaty of Ryswick in 1697.

ed the wording, and the Indigenous New Hampshire Collaborative Commission has already vetted it,” Denise Pouliot said.

While the DHA did not respond to repeated requests for comment, the group’s president David Strong sent an email in March 2023 to the sign’s committee members—nearly a month after the NHCNAA proposed their language—expressing the

stands where the DHA is coming from, in that this sign is meant to represent one historical event, not the entire history of Native Americans’ relationship with English colonists.

“It’s debatable,” Behrendt said. “I mean, yes, this attack was one by the Native Americans, but is that enough context? Should we have an obligation to say things about

association like [the DHA] as Indigenous people who are trying to put forth the truth in history using white vetted documents, and the DHA tells us those aren’t real, for us the only explanation we have left is racism. Literally, I am grasping at straws to figure out what is going on.”

According to Denise Pouliot, the DHA stopped directly communicating with them

“A lot of the history we’re taught is written from a very singular perspective, but now we’re trying to present the history from various perspectives to tell various stories about a single event.”

DHA’s disapproval of the language. In the email, Strong said the DHA was unable to find contemporaneous historical documents that supported the NHCAA’s proposed text.

“Unrelated historical events that occurred more than 300 years ago can easily be conflated, and the interpretations can also be colored by the biases of contemporary social discourse,” Strong wrote. “We are not interested in talking about history in an accusatory way, assigning blame or painting all of one people or nationality with the same brush.”

In the same email, the DHA presented a three-page list of their historical findings, and proposed new language “based on that evidence.”

Durham Town Planner Michael Behrendt, who has been a mediator throughout this process, says he understands the desire to change the sign’s language, especially since this is the only state historical marker that tells the history of Native American conflict with English colonists in Durham. However, he also under-

the wars that were waged against Indigenous people and the land that was stolen from them? But maybe there were no other comparable attacks waged against the Indigenous people by English settlers, so it’s possible this is a big event we should be calling out. How do we describe this, and

six months ago, which has slowed down the committee’s revision of the sign’s language.

Ultimately, both parties want to present the most accurate, objective version of the event’s history.

“I mean, the conversation can only go so far, but we need to make sure we’re making

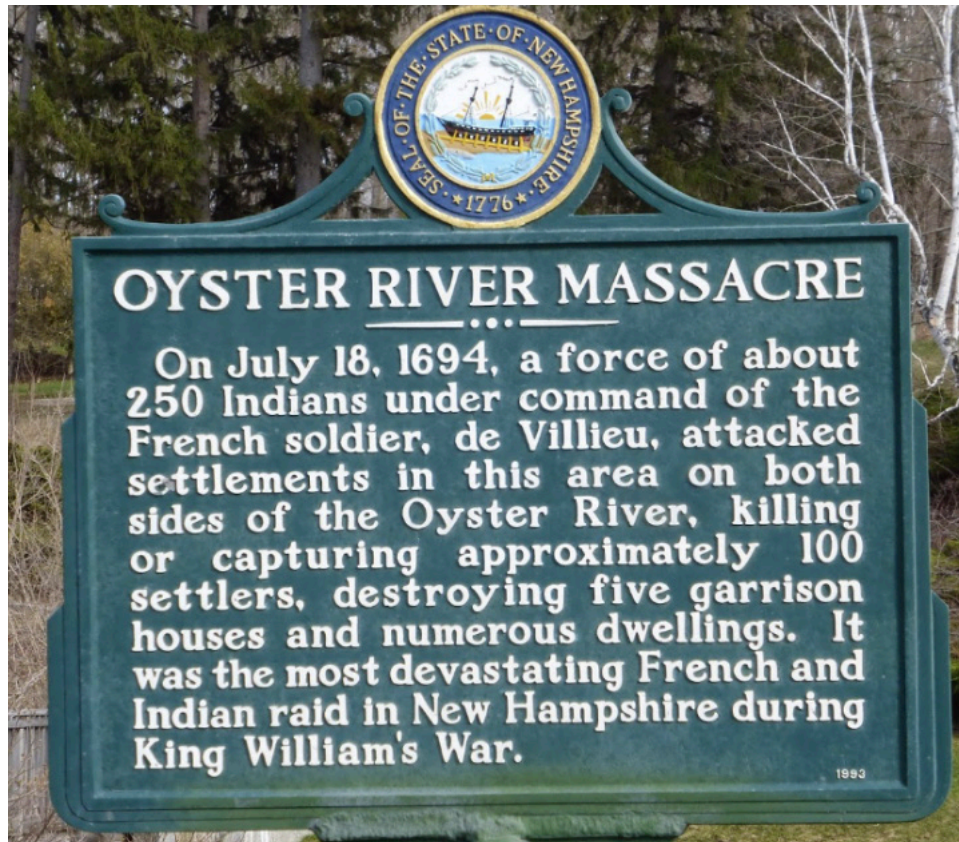
space to have these conversations [...] At a certain point, the story is what it is. We try to take emotion out of it to present the historical facts, and we want to ensure there’s enough context,” said Dixon.

As of right now, Dixon says there has been limited forward motion among committee members as they try to reach a consensus, but Behrendt senses the conversation is coming to a close. “At any rate, it seems like most of the people represented are oriented toward telling the story that supports Native Americans. My hope is that within the six parties

we can find some kind of compromise and use this whole thing for education.” **M**

- Abby Owens

Photo courtesy of NHDHR



with only less than 100 words?”

Denise Pouliot understands the sign is only commemorating a single historical event, but believes all sides still need to be represented. “History does not occur in a vacuum,” she said. “When you deal with an

What's the Deal with Advanced Humanities at ORHS?



“How can we offer the opportunity for students to challenge themselves in the humanities while still maintaining a heterogenous learning environment?”

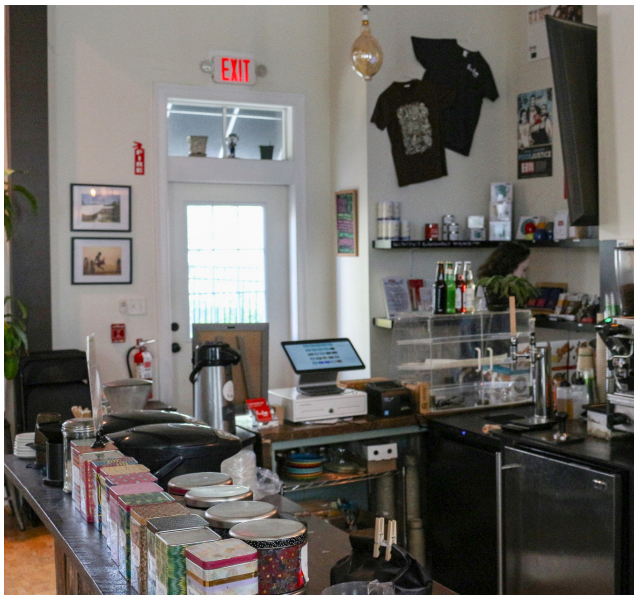
In my two-part opinion series, I first explain why ORHS should not add an AP English course to our curriculum while picking apart the non-profit mega-giant we know as the College Board.

If not AP, then what else? I tackle my proposed solutions for what can replace the want for AP English, including the option of “contracting” in non-advanced humanities classes.



- Grace Webb

The Big Impact of Shopping Small



Picture Portsmouth, NH, a cute little coastal city full of life and local businesses scattered throughout, creating a community of support. Now think of Newington, massive parking lots with giant warehouses for stores, and mega-corporations in each building. Why are the vibes so different?

Growing up, I've lived around the small business community in and around Durham, NH. Both my parents manage small businesses, one owning Musical Arts of Dover and the other directing the Freedom Café in downtown Durham. After helping and working at both of these businesses, I've seen first-hand the communities being developed because of them. I think high schoolers should try to shop locally as much as possible in order to support and develop the community.

Madeline Healey ('25), a student who works at the Freedom Café, finds that everyone who works and volunteers there actually wants to be there. "The people that choose to work in smaller businesses and smaller communities are the people that are looking for that specific community," she says.

Having employees who enjoy their job is a huge part of creating a positive atmosphere in a business. If you walk into a big chain café and the barista clearly hates their job, you won't have as good of an experience. If they love their job, they'll likely care more about the customers and put more effort into making the product the best possible quality. Oxford University conducted a study titled "Happy workers are 13% more productive" showing how workers get more done when they enjoy their job.

Local businesses can't maintain that atmosphere on their own, which is why they need support from their community. "Small businesses help promote overall local economic growth. [...] It has more local benefits than buying something off of Amazon. It's going to help someone in their local area make a living," explains Tyler Hall ('23), a student who previously worked at Oyster River Cycle and Sport in Durham.

I think that's one thing many high schoolers overlook when choosing where to shop. These small businesses are run by real people and families, and they need a way to stay afloat. With the right support, these businesses can thrive enough to be able to give back to the community, and The Oyster River Cycle (and Sport) can continue.

The main problem with local businesses, especially places like restaurants, is that they are typically more expensive than the big chains. Higher prices usually mean better quality or service, but the problem is high schoolers aren't made of money. It's totally fine to go to a Wendy's or McDonald's

"I think it's more like a close-knit community."

when you're just trying to grab a quick bite to eat, but if you're going out to eat with friends for a special occasion, you'll typically have a much better experience going somewhere local. I liked how Hall put it: "If you have the money



to be able to go buy stuff locally from a small business, absolutely go do that.”

One of the reasons small businesses are usually more expensive is because the majority of their products are completely locally sourced. Locally sourced products mean environmental benefits because the products aren’t being shipped nearly as far, creating fewer carbon emissions.

“Try new things. I think people are so opposed to try new things, and smaller businesses just have such a charm to them.”

Products coming from nearby are also almost guaranteed to be ethically sourced. “It’s more environmentally friendly, more open, more welcoming, and almost more cheerful, I’d say, as opposed to a big city with big box stores and all that,” says Hall.

A lot of big corporations typically source their products from other countries, and not have a transparent supply chain. They may not mean any harm, but this means that they likely don’t know where their products are coming from, or how they are being made. That can oftentimes mean child labor or human trafficking was involved in the process of creating these products, which is why they can be sold for so cheap, especially from large clothing and food brands. These products are then shipped across the world, creating a large amount of carbon emissions.

Those big box stores also just don’t give off the same vibe. Obviously there needs to be a good balance between local shops and mega corporations, but as Healey puts it, “if there’s only large corporations that are running everything, [...] it loses a lot of personality and there’s not a lot of personal human interaction and energy that goes into whatever the business is.”

Working at a local business is also typically a more positive experience. If the shop isn’t too big, most of the staff will get to know each other and become friends, which would make working more pleasant. Will Fagan (‘25), who works at the Flag Hill Winery in Lee, can relate to this. “I think it’s more like a close-knit community.”

From my experience working at my parents’ businesses, seeing that community develop is such a cool experience, and getting the opportunity to be a part of it is so fun. I’ve seen relationships built between staff and customers, and friendships formed out of those.

Small businesses are important. They create an atmosphere that can make a town come to life, and it’s not hard to support them. As Healey puts it, “try new things. I think people are so opposed to try new things, and smaller businesses just have such a charm to them.”

Next time you’re looking for somewhere to eat, or want to buy some new clothes, consider shopping locally. You never know, you might end up coming back. **M**

- Micah Bessette



ORHS IN A HAY DAZE

Lately, the app Hay Day has been in the midst of its heyday at Oyster River High School (ORHS).

The game that many students played during their childhood has resurfaced and the 'Hay Day craze' has been sweeping through ORHS. Hay Day is a farming simulator game where the player grows crops, tends to animals, produces goods, and completes tasks. Students enjoy the sense of control, stress-relieving qualities, and overall fun that the game provides. Some have gotten so invested that they find it becoming a procrastination method or even addiction. Many redownloaded the game and picked up right where they left off when they were younger.

Colin Klein ('24) (Level 31) said, "I think a lot of people play Clash of Clans and all those games. People played them in middle school and they were really popular. Now, within the past year, everyone has been redownloading stuff that we used to play for nostalgia." Klein redownloaded the game about six months ago and has been playing along with some of his friends.

Emily Liu ('23) (Level 47) shared that she has been playing since she was five on her mom's account. "It's been on and off over the course of my life. Pretty recently I've gotten back into it, and I think I've been playing for the majority of the school year." She has noticed the popularity of the game increasing throughout ORHS: "it's always funny when you go up to someone, see their phone tilted sideways, and you're like 'oh what are you playing' and they say Hay Day," she said.

The game is geared for any and all ages, Klein said. "I think it's more targeted at younger kids, but I think it's not so childish that someone our age can't play it. High schoolers still have interest in the game's strategy and complex thinking." When players are younger, they may choose to focus more on the animals or decorating their farm, but as they get older, they may enjoy the more economic elements of the game like producing and selling goods.

A lot of ORHS students enjoy the sense of control that the game provides them. Ella Boyd ('25) (Level 55) shared, "you control the looks of your farm and running everything so you're basically in charge of this whole app." She continued to explain how the differ-

ent levels of the game and items that get unlocked provide a sense of accomplishment for her.

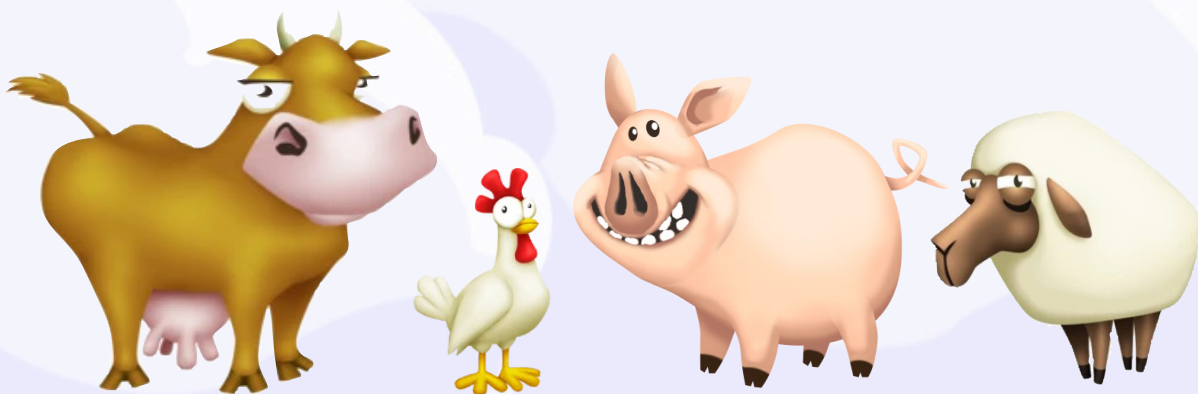
Liu shared the sentiment and said, "I think it's just really relaxing and all you do is farm. There's a really nice feeling of being in control, working things out, and having everything planned." She finds that the game is a good way to relax, but "I think the game is also very addictive because it sets time limits and deadlines for the players and you feel like you have to meet them, so you get hooked into it," she said.

Like Liu and many other players, Boyd has also experienced the feeling of addiction. "Since there's timed stuff and things you want to go back to, you can put it down but have the little inkling in the back of your mind that you're going to pick it up later and keep going. I'll play even for just five minutes before the bell rings to feed my cows, make some butter, and get myself prepared for when I come back to it after class."

Although it can easily become a distraction, Holden Bell ('23) (Level 38) finds that "Hay Day takes too much brain power so I can't listen to a teacher and try to play Hay Day." This means he doesn't tend to play it during class but does during other times. Most students play the game during slow parts of class, flex, or free time at home that might have normally been spent doing homework.

Even though playing Hay Day can become a distraction, it's usually only for a few months. Many players go through phases. Boyd said, "I'll be in a phase where I want to play Hay Day every day all the time, and then all of a sudden I'll drop it for months." She reflected on the future of the popularity around Hay Day at ORHS and shared, "I think there was a point in the school year this year when it was really popular with everybody, but now the phase is hitting where it gets put down. I bet you it will come back at some point, and everybody will be obsessed with it again." **M**

- Libby Davidson (Level 62)



ORHS OUTFITS

Walking through the halls of Oyster River High School (ORHS), you'll typically see all sorts of outfits. Some are extravagant, some are casual, and some just look like pajamas. Knowing this, I wondered what it would be like to capture students' styles and outfits around ORHS.

From my experience at ORHS, everyone dresses differently in so many unique styles. There isn't just one "look" here. You can find just about any style or outfit and the students aren't afraid to express themselves through how they dress. Knowing this, I was excited to use my experience from taking MOR's bylines to find and capture all the different and unique styles throughout the school on the first hot day of spring, and then give my unqualified two cents on each outfit.



"I really like these pants because they feel summery."

- Kate Stone ('24)

A very simple yet comfortable looking outfit. The flowery pants with the black top give off a very floral Friday Feel. Millie would be proud.



"A nice button up and shorts; it's gettin' summery in here. It's gettin' warm."

- Greg Caron ('25)

Plain and simple, but nice. Nothing too extravagant but still semi-formal. Looks like something someone would wear on the first hot day of spring.



"My grandma bought me this vest and I wore it today because she was getting on me about how I needed to send her a photo of me in it."

- Maryellen Moore ('24)

Grandma has good style. The vest gives off 80s punk vibes and, paired with the flowy black pants, creates a unique combination of comfort and grunge.



“It’s the first actual good day of spring so I wanted to dress cute.”
- Mihira Govindaradula (‘24)

This outfit makes me think of a beach party in early summer. I’m picturing a campfire with friends near the ocean with waves crashing in the distance. This one is also perfect for Floral Friday.



“This was the first [band shirt] that I got; it was a present to me.”
- Owen Nelan (‘24)

Red Hot Chili Peppers are perfect for a red-hot spring day. The jeans and band shirt combo is fairly simple, but it works, and I like that the shirt has a sentimental value, makes it more interesting.



“I kind of just woke up and was like ‘ok this is what I’m going to wear today, because I had nothing else and it’s 80 degrees and sunny.”
- Marcus Anderson (‘23)

I like how you can tell that it’s hot out just by looking at this outfit. The shirt gives off late August vibes, when it’s so hot out you can’t even imagine leaving the comfort of your air-conditioned house.



“It has a teddy bear, it’s from rue 21, and then I have pants from Christmas!”
- Maggie Fitzhenry (‘24)

Some students are unbothered by the warm weather, and I respect it. The teddy bear and Christmas pants give off a very sleepy vibe. I want to go take a nap after seeing this cozy outfit.



"I have jeans on, I have a band t-shirt, and I have a jacket."
- Logan Jabour ('24)

The band shirt with jeans is a popular look. I like how the layers, colors, and his hair create a very punk rock feel. The jacket with jeans is a bold move for the temperature, but it works.



"I always wanted a red collared shirt. I recently bought these pants because I wanted pants I could wear in the summer that were breathable."
- Ian Hricz ('24)

This outfit looks simple yet stylish, and comfortable. He pulls it off effortlessly, and the red collared shirt suits him. This one reminds me of mid-May, with the simple spring colors and a semi-formal look.



"These are my favorite pants, I got them from Savers. One of my favorite shirts, I also got it from Savers."
- Axel Freund ('25)

I love all the individual elements that combine to make this thrifted outfit. There are so many layers that all add up and work so well together. The Ninja Turtles shirt with the crystal necklaces and the fingerless netted gloves creates a very alternative look.

Capturing each of these pictures was a really cool experience, and I enjoyed being able to see the variety and taste between each student. Hearing from each student made me notice how you can tell a lot about a person based on how they dress. From Hawaiian shirts to flowy pants to thrifted fits, ORHS has so many individuals who all express themselves differently, so being able to see each of these expressions was awesome. I might have to take advice from some of these for later.

- Micah Bessette

Online Exclusives



A Conversation About Religion
Tess Brown ('23) & Zoe Selig ('23)



Teachers' Favorite Classroom Items
Justin Partis ('23)

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Grace Webb ('23)**



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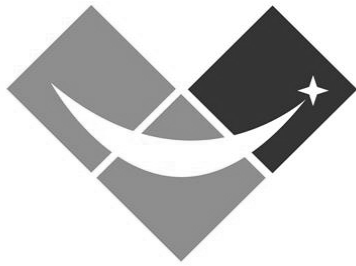
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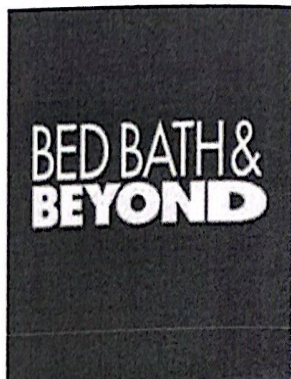
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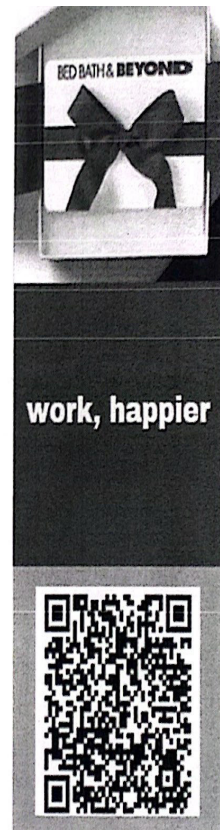
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Precalculus
Trigonometry Review Quiz

46/50

1. Convert -200° to radians. Leave answers in terms of π . (1 point)

$-\frac{10\pi}{9}$

2. Convert $\frac{5\pi}{6}$ radians to degrees. (1 point)

150°

3. Express each of the following in terms of a reference angle. (1 point each)

a) $\cos(-130^\circ)$

$\cos(50^\circ)$

b) $\tan(\frac{5\pi}{6})$

$-\tan(\frac{\pi}{6})$

4. Find the EXACT VALUE of each expression. Use simple radical form where appropriate. (1 point each)

a) $\cot \frac{\pi}{4}$

1

b) $\csc(-150^\circ)$

$-\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$

c) $\cos(\frac{2\pi}{3})$

$-\frac{1}{2}$

d) $\sec \pi$

-1

5. Evaluate each of the following. Leave answers in simplified radical form. (3 points each)

a) $\tan^2 135^\circ + \sec^2 330^\circ - \sin 30^\circ$

$1 + \frac{4}{3} - \frac{1}{2} = \frac{11}{6}$

b) $\csc^2 150^\circ + \sin 270^\circ - \cos 180^\circ$

$(\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}})^2 + (-1) - (-1) = \frac{4}{3}$

